

8 **EPIC WINTER** **STORYTELLERS**

REVIEWED

WINTER

It's long a
winter of
A future of
the story

AND

THE

It is the world
that will
Be a
Dramatic

AND

GOLD

Young Gold, the
and the to argue
with the story

THE



8

BARRY WINDSOR-SMITH STORYTELLER

JUNE 97
32 PGS.

FEATURING:

PARADIXMAN

"I'm living in a
zillion-year-old
flying saucer with
a bunch of buggy
little aliens . . ."

ALSO:

THE FREEBOOTERS

"It is the world
that will burn.
Axus -- not just
Shahariza!"

AND:

young GODS

"Young God, 'tis
not wise to argue
with Destiny!"



DIRECT SALES



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scanned by Potifar, July 2003

PREVIOUSLY IN

After what seemed like months, but could be years, of analysis that was more like scrutiny, with a psychiatrist who might be human, could be an insect or possibly an alien from another planet, the man called Tristan Caine seems to be free of the claustrophobic environment of his doctor's office -- or what he thought to be an office but might not have been. He imagines that his simple phrase, "Take me to your leader," was the turn of the key that opened his psycho chamber and set him free. This may or may not be so.

From the irradiated canyons of post-WWIII New York where he left his friend Dava, to the steel and glass palisades of an alien spacecraft hovering motionless above a dinosaur-infested forest, Tristan Caine seems to have come a long way indeed.



But for such a man as he, who has been touched perhaps by madness or by some form of reality not of his understanding, to be free of foot does not mean he is free of spirit nor of the consequences of his past life -- or is it perhaps his future life....?

THE PARADOX MAN

Barry Windsor-Smith: STORYTELLER VOL. NO. 8

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I KNEW THIS GUY ONCE WHO USED A REALLY ANNOYING CATCH-PHRASE FOR ANYTHING HE THOUGHT WAS OKAY OR EVEN BETTER--"THAT'S WORTH THE PRICE OF ADMISSION!" HE'D SAY. HE'D SAY THAT ABOUT ANYTHING OR ANYONE THAT MET HIS APPROVAL. "SHE'S REALLY WORTH THE PRICE OF ADMISSION," HE'D INTONE WITH A SMIRK.

HE USED TO REALLY PISS ME OFF.

I NEVER LIKED THE GUY BUT HE LIKED ME FOR SOME REASON, SO I WAS STUCK WITH IT.

PART TWO

HI, HOW ARE YA?

HI, HOW ARE YA?

AT ANY RATE...

IF THIS ISN'T WORTH THE PRICE OF ADMISSION THEN I DON'T KNOW WHAT IS!

I'M LIVING IN A ZILLION-YEAR-OLD FLYING SALICER WITH A BUNCH OF BUGGY LITTLE ALIENS FROM WHO-KNOWS-WHERE, WHO ARE, I THINK--I'M JUST GUESSING--CONDUCTING SOME SORT OF EXPERIMENTS, GENETIC ENGINEERING, RE-POPULATION, DE-POPULATION BLAH BLAH BLAH ON THE LOCAL JURASSIC WILDLIFE.

CHAPTER EIGHT --

HI, HOW Y'DOING?

7i0'D!.

APART FROM SOME BASIC LANGUAGE BARRIERS AND THE FACT THAT THEY ALL LOOK EXACTLY THE SAME TO ME--

I'M GETTING ALONG QUITE WELL WITH THESE PEOPLE. FUNNY HOW THINGS HAPPEN.

NOT THAT WE HAVE ALWAYS BEEN SO PLEASANTLY COEXISTENT, MIND YOU, WE HAD BIG PROBLEMS AT FIRST--

I WAS REALLY AGGRESSIVE WITH THEM 'CAUSE THEY SCARED THE CRAP OUT OF ME, TO BE HONEST.

THEY PRETTY MUCH RESPONDED IN KIND EVEN THOUGH THEY'RE NOT REALLY VIOLENT TYPES. THEY'VE GOT A VERY PASSIVE, BUT STILL INDUSTRIOUS, NATURE ABOUT THEM: ALWAYS BUSY, ALWAYS COURTEOUS.

SO THEN THEY SET ME UP IN WHAT THEY FIGURED WAS A HUMANE, NON-IMPACTIVE "INFORMATION-GATHERING PLATFORM"--THAT'S HOW THEIR TERM TRANSLATES--AFTER EXTRACTING MINUTE MEMORY SAMPLES FROM ME.

PART OF THEIR WHOLE ETHIC IS NON-INTRUSION, RESPECTING OTHER BEINGS' DIGNITY AND STUFF--

SO, ALTHOUGH THEY HAD THE POWER AND TECHNOLOGY TO DO ANYTHING THEY WANTED WITH ME, THE UPSHOT IS THAT THEIR ETHICAL CONDUCT RULES RESTRICTED FULL-BLOWN INTRUSION.

OF COURSE, THEY HAD NO IDEA THAT MY MEMORIES ARE ABOUT AS LINEAR AS A BOWL OF SPAGHETTI AND ANY HOPE OF HARMONIOUS PAIRING WOULD BE A WILD LONGSHOT.

SO THEY HAD TO DEVISE A WHOLE FANCY SCENARIO TO INDUCE INFORMATION FROM ME.

I'M PROUD TO SAY THAT THE STRONGEST AND MOST ACCESSIBLE MEMORY THEY FOUND BOBBING IN THE BOLOGNESE I CALL MY BRAIN WAS THAT OF MY WIFE, LILLY. LILLY CAINE.

SHE WAS BORN IN NINETEEN-TWENTY, SAME AS ME.

WHEN I LAST SAW HER BEAUTIFUL FACE WE WERE TRADING LOVE-BITES AT THE DOOR OF OUR HOTEL IN WAIKIKI IN APRIL OF 1947.

WE WERE BOTH PUSHING THIRTY IN THOSE DAYS.

RIGHT NOW, WHENEVER THIS IS, MY WIFE HAS YET TO EXIST AND I HAVE BEEN TWENTY-NINE FOR SEVERAL MILLION YEARS.

LILLY WAS, IS, WILL BE A CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGIST WORKING IN

COULD YOU DROP ME AT 30-PORT?

FBI.

WORKING IN SAN DIEGO, WHERE WE LIVED FOR JUST SEVEN HAPPY YEARS.

SOME GRAIN OF MEMORY THEY FOUND IN ME TOLD THEM THAT A PSYCHIATRIST CREATES COMMUNICATION, HELPING HUMANS TO TALK ABOUT THINGS--

SO THEY KNEW THEY WERE ONTO A GOOD THING THERE.

THANK YOU.

BUT BEYOND THAT, EVERYTHING ELSE THE ALIEN COMMAND DID WAS UNINTENDED FARCE.

SOMEHOW THEY MANAGED TO DISSOLVE MY SWEET-HEARTED LILLY INTO THAT INDIGNANT BITCH WHO CALLED THE MANAGER OVER 'CAUSE I MADE A FUCKING SEXIST JOKE--

JESUS! I MEAN, JESUS--! THAT WAS NINETEEN FORTY-FIVE! WHO THE HELL KNEW ANY BETTER IN THOSE DAYS?

HELLO.

HI--

LILLY DIDN'T MIND, SHE THOUGHT IT WAS FUNNY-- AND SHE'S A GIRL!

DON'T MIND ME--JUST PASSING THROUGH.

Y'GOTTA BE REALLY UP-TIGHT IF Y'CAN'T LAUGH AT YOURSELF, Y'KNOW.

BEAUTIFUL DAY, ISN'T IT?

BIT CHILLY,
MAYBE--

SO THERE I WAS, IN SOME CATA-
TONIC STATE, THINKING I HAD
A PSYCHIATRIC PROBLEM SOME-
TIME IN THE MID-TWENTY-
FIRST CENTURY--

BUT BRIGHT.

AND FOR A WHILE THERE,
THINKING IT WAS ONLY
VAGUELY COINCIDENTAL
THAT MY PUSHY BITCH
DOCTOR LOOKED QUITE A
BIT LIKE MY WIFE!

THE MEANING HAS GONE
FROM THIS NOWADAYS, BUT
ONCE UPON A LONG TIME
AGO LILLY HAD REMARKED
THAT "THERE'S NO SUCH
THING AS COINCIDENCE."

EVENTUALLY, I GUESS, I JUST LOST
IT--I TOTALLY LOST IT AND
THINGS GOT VERY TOUGH BETWEEN
ME AND THEM.



BIT CHILLY,
MAYBE--

SO THERE I WAS, IN SOME CATA-
TONIC STATE, THINKING I HAD
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THING AS COINCIDENCE."

I'VE WONDERED SINCE IF SHE
HAD SOME PRECOGNIZANCE
THING ABOUT WHAT WAS
GONNA HAPPEN TO ME AFTER
WE LOST EACH OTHER.

AT ANY RATE--PUSH CAME TO SHOVE
FOR ME WHEN THE ALIEN COMMAND
REALIZED I WASN'T GOING FOR
THEIR SHIT ANYMORE--

I WAS TIRED, I WAS HURTING PHYSICALLY
AND EMOTIONALLY WITH EVERY NEW "SESSION"
THEY TRIED TO DRAG ME THROUGH.

EVENTUALLY, I GUESS, I JUST LOST
IT--I TOTALLY LOST IT AND
THINGS GOT VERY TOUGH BETWEEN
ME AND THEM.

I STOOD MY GROUND,
THOUGH--I HAD TO
DO THAT.

I'VE WONDERED SINCE IF SHE
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THEY TRIED TO DRAG ME THROUGH.

I STOOD MY GROUND,
THOUGH--I HAD TO
DO THAT.



THE WORST THING WAS
WHEN THEY SNATCHED
MY PHOTO OF LILLY--



THEY KNEW THEY'D SCREWED
UP SOMEWHERE WITH THEIR
DOCTOR FIGURE AND USED THAT
PICTURE TO TRY TO IMPROVE
THE MODEL--

THAT MADE MATTERS
WORSE STILL--

THING IS I JUST COULDN'T
STAND THE IDEA OF
THEM HAVING A PIECE OF
LILLY IN THEIR BONY
ALIEN HANDS--

THEY WENT TOO FAR
WITH THAT--THEY
TOUCHED MY WIFE,
OR ALL I HAD OF
HER, AND THAT...



THAT WAS THE
FINAL STRAW.

YEAH, IT'S JUST A GOOFY
THING OF HER PULLING A
FACE AT ME, BUT IT'S
ALL I HAVE.

IT'S THE LAST PICTURE I EVER SHOT
OF HER-- THERE AT THE HOTEL IN
WAIKIKI A COUPLE OF HOURS BEFORE
THE NUCLEAR AGE BLASTED ME
RIGHT OUT OF EXISTENCE...

AT LEAST NORMAL
EXISTENCE

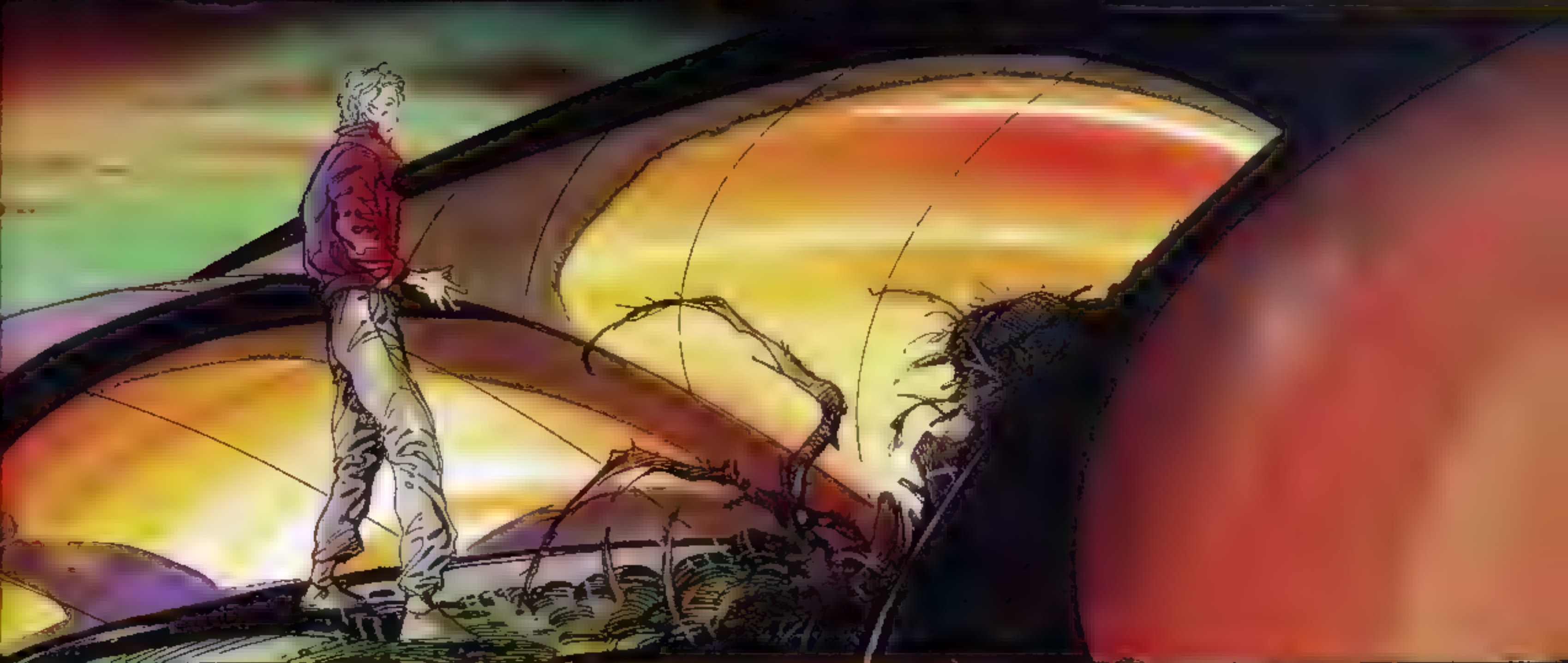
AOW, FUCK!



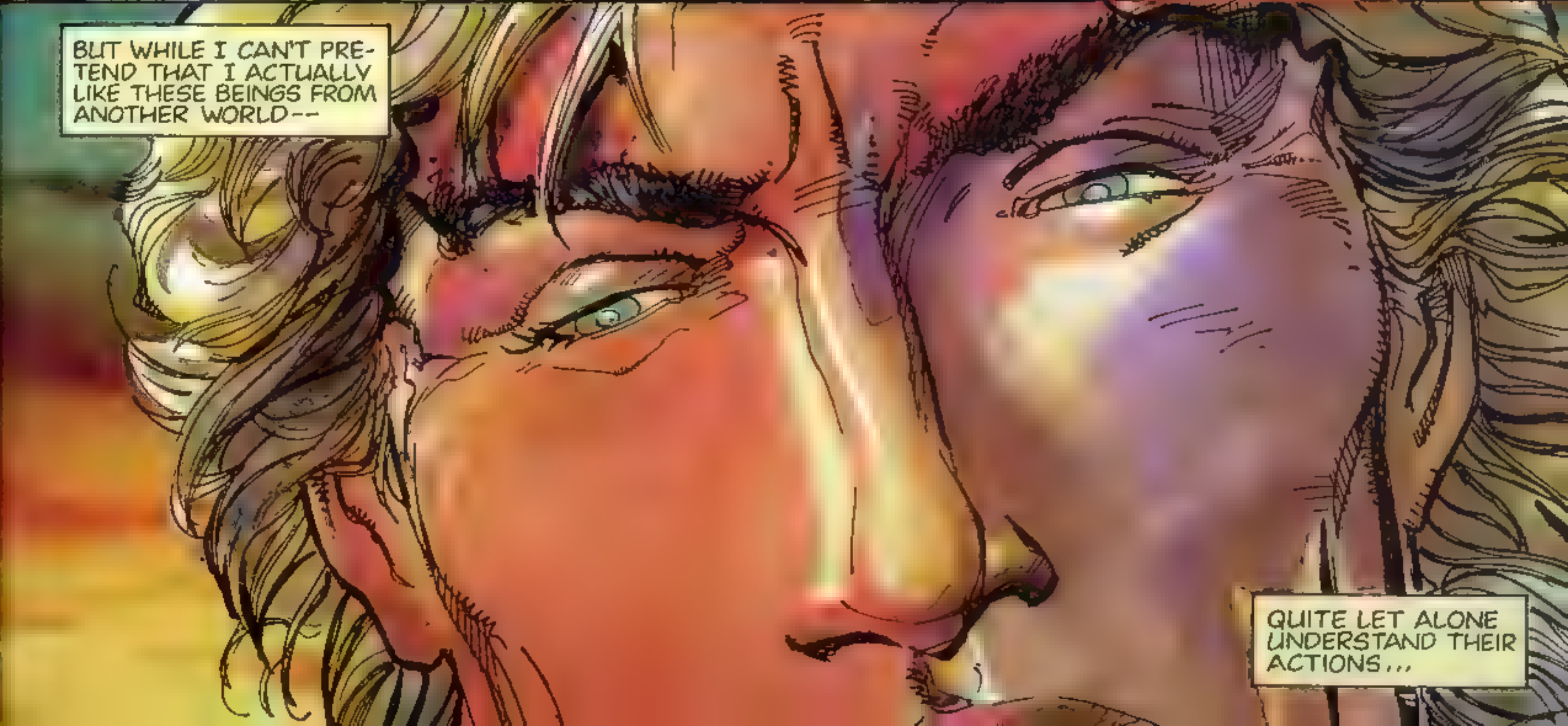


J-JESUS--

SHIT



BUT WHILE I CAN'T PRE-
TEND THAT I ACTUALLY
LIKE THESE BEINGS FROM
ANOTHER WORLD--



QUITE LET ALONE
UNDERSTAND THEIR
ACTIONS...

WE HAVE MANAGED TO COME TO AN UNDERSTANDING.

AND IN THEIR OWN WAY THEY
SHOW ME CERTAIN KINDNESSES AND
SENSITIVITIES TO MY NEEDS.

I'M TOO TALL TO FIT COM-
FORTABLY IN THEIR LIVING
QUARTERS, FOR INSTANCE, SO
THEY OFFERED TO ACCOM-
MODATE ME IN ANY FASHION
I WISHED FOR.

THE THING ABOUT THESE ALIENS
IS THAT THEY'RE SO FAR AWAY
FROM ANY TECHNOLOGY I'VE
EVER KNOWN THAT IT SEEMS TO
SOMEONE LIKE ME THAT THEY
CAN DO ABSOLUTELY ANYTHING.

THEY'RE LIKE...
FUCKING WIZARDS!

I ALLOWED THEM TO SCAN MY
MEMORY OF A CARTOON SHOW
I REMEMBER FROM THE TWEN-
TIETH CENTURY--THE JEFFER-
SONS OR THE JETTISONS OR
SOMETHING LIKE THAT--AND
THEY BUILT THIS WHOLE FUCK-
ING PLACE FOR ME JUST FROM
MY MEMORY--

JUST LIKE THAT.
TOTALLY WEIRD
SHIT.

I TOLD THEM THAT MY TYPE
OF HUMAN BEING NEEDS
PRIVACY SOMETIMES... JUST
TO BE ALONE, SO THEY BUILT
MY APARTMENT ON THE HULL
OF THEIR SHIP ON THE WEST
SIDE, ABOUT A QUARTER MILE
FROM THE EXHAUST PODS AT
THE THIRTIETH SYSTEM PORT.

IT'S A BIT OF A TREK
GETTING BACK AND FORTH
ALL THE TIME, AND I
GOTTA ADMIT--

WHEN THEY SOMETIMES TEST-
RUN THEIR ENGINES AT NIGHT
MY WHOLE APARTMENT RAT-
TLES LIKE A FREIGHT TRAIN
ON A TRELLIS BRIDGE.

BUT STILL, I GOT A GREAT VIEW
OF THE ANTEDILUVIAN FOREST--

AND ANYTHING I
ASK FOR, THE
ALIENS SUPPLY ME
WITH... CLOTHES,
CIGARETTES,
AND STUFF LIKE
THAT.

I PRETTY MUCH
GOT IT MADE.

SO IS THIS
BORING, OR
WHAT?

NAH, I'VE GOT PLENTY TO
OCCUPY MYSELF WITH--

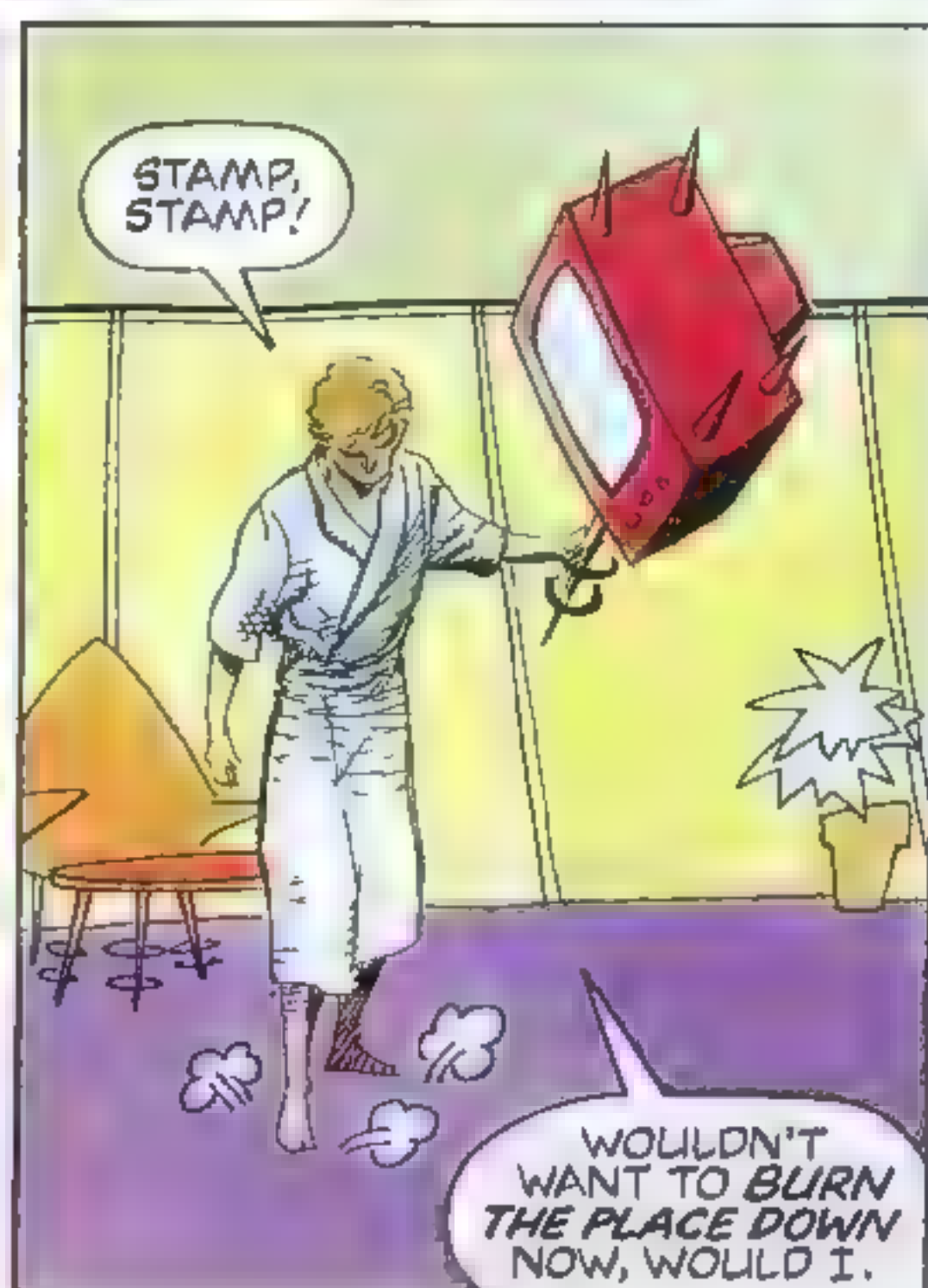
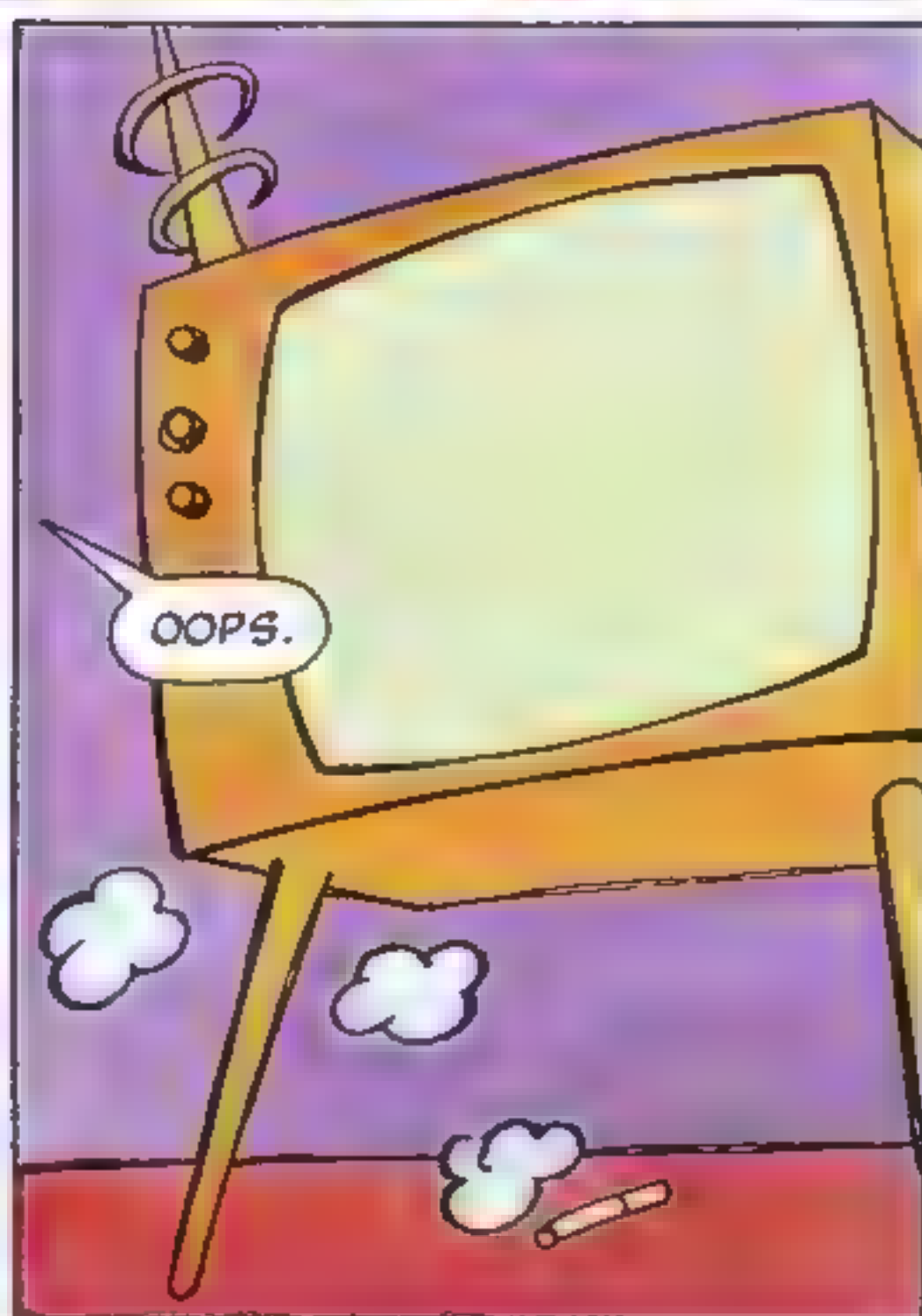
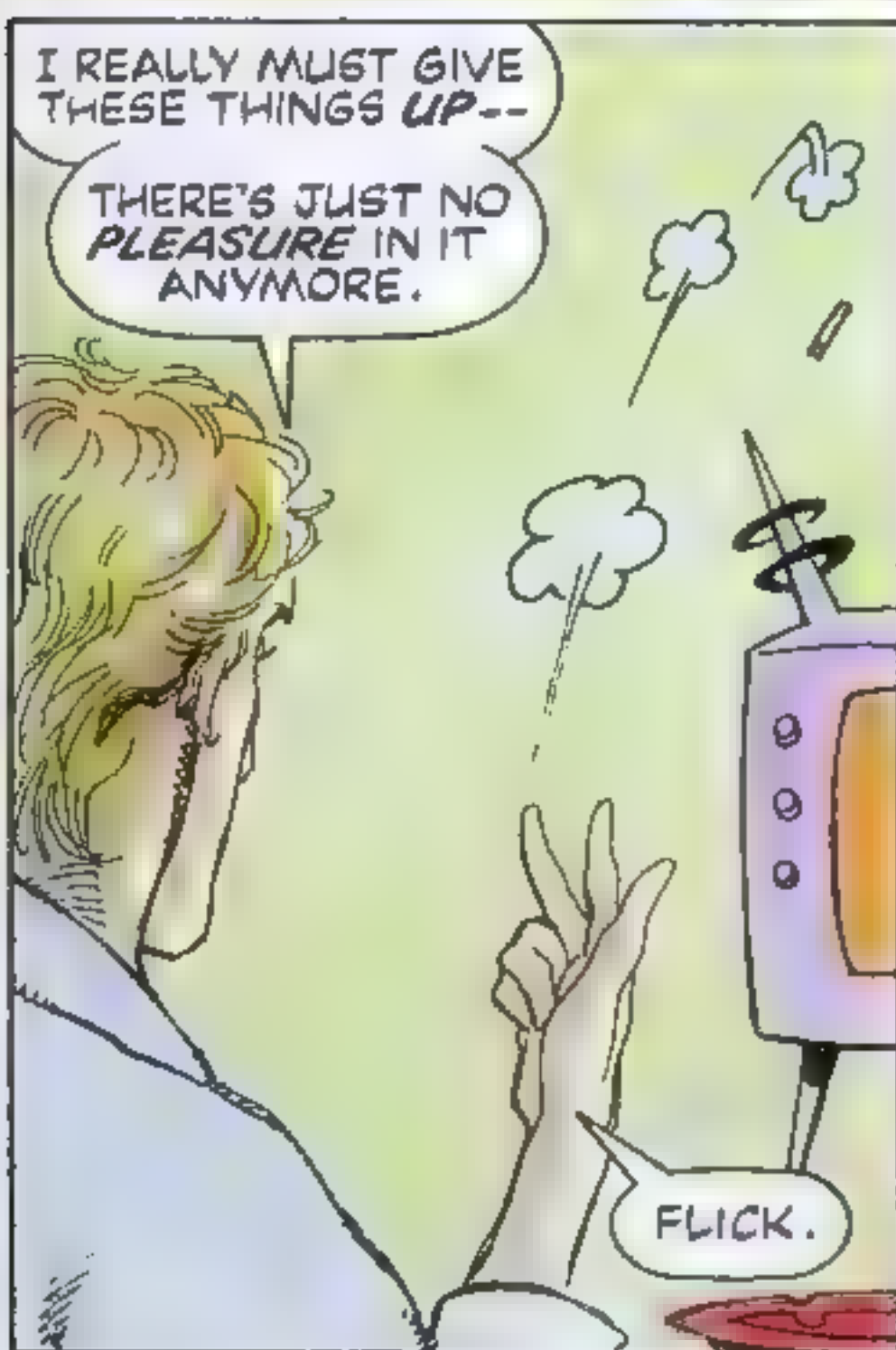
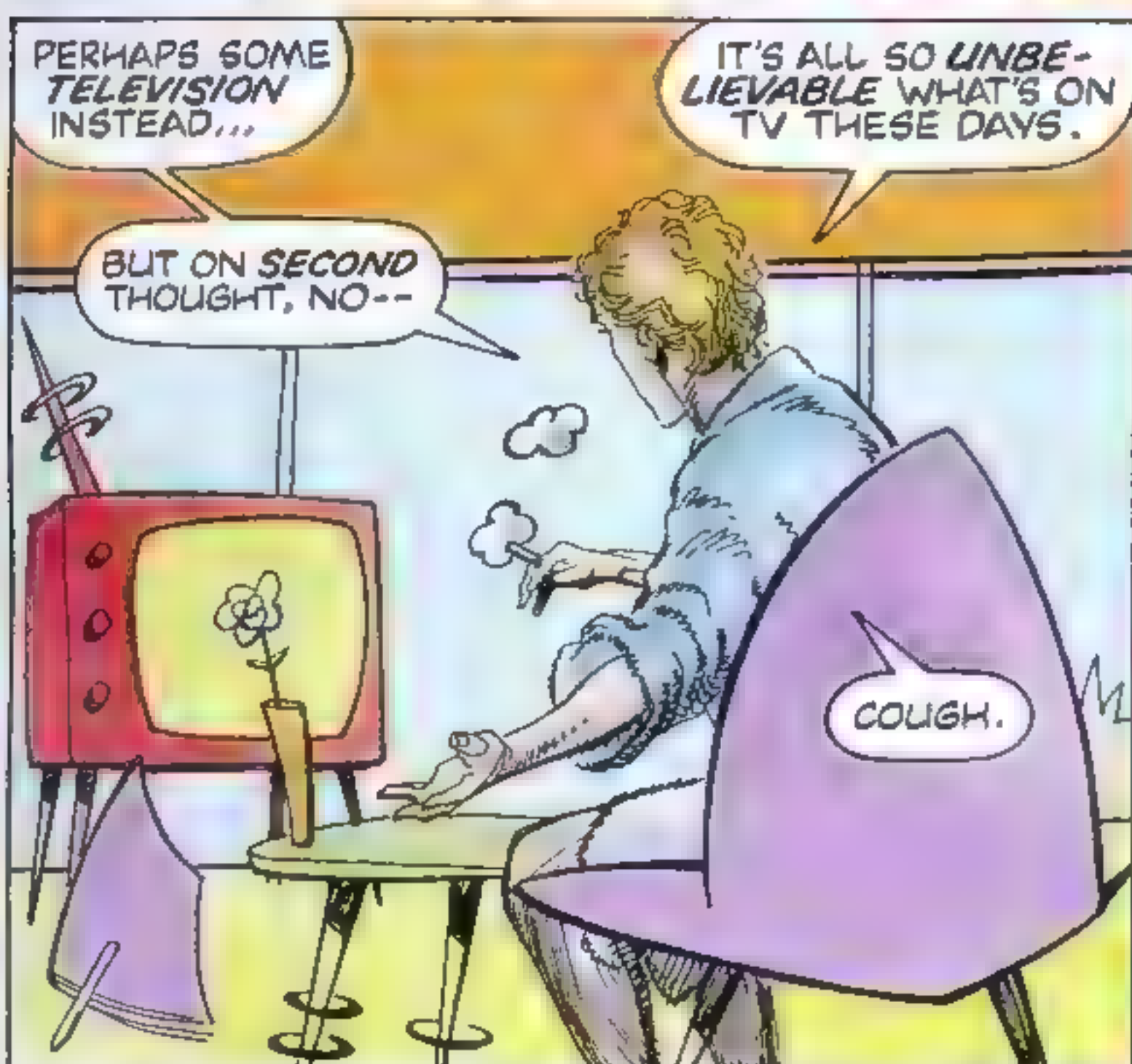
LITTLE GAMES
I LIKE TO
PLAY--

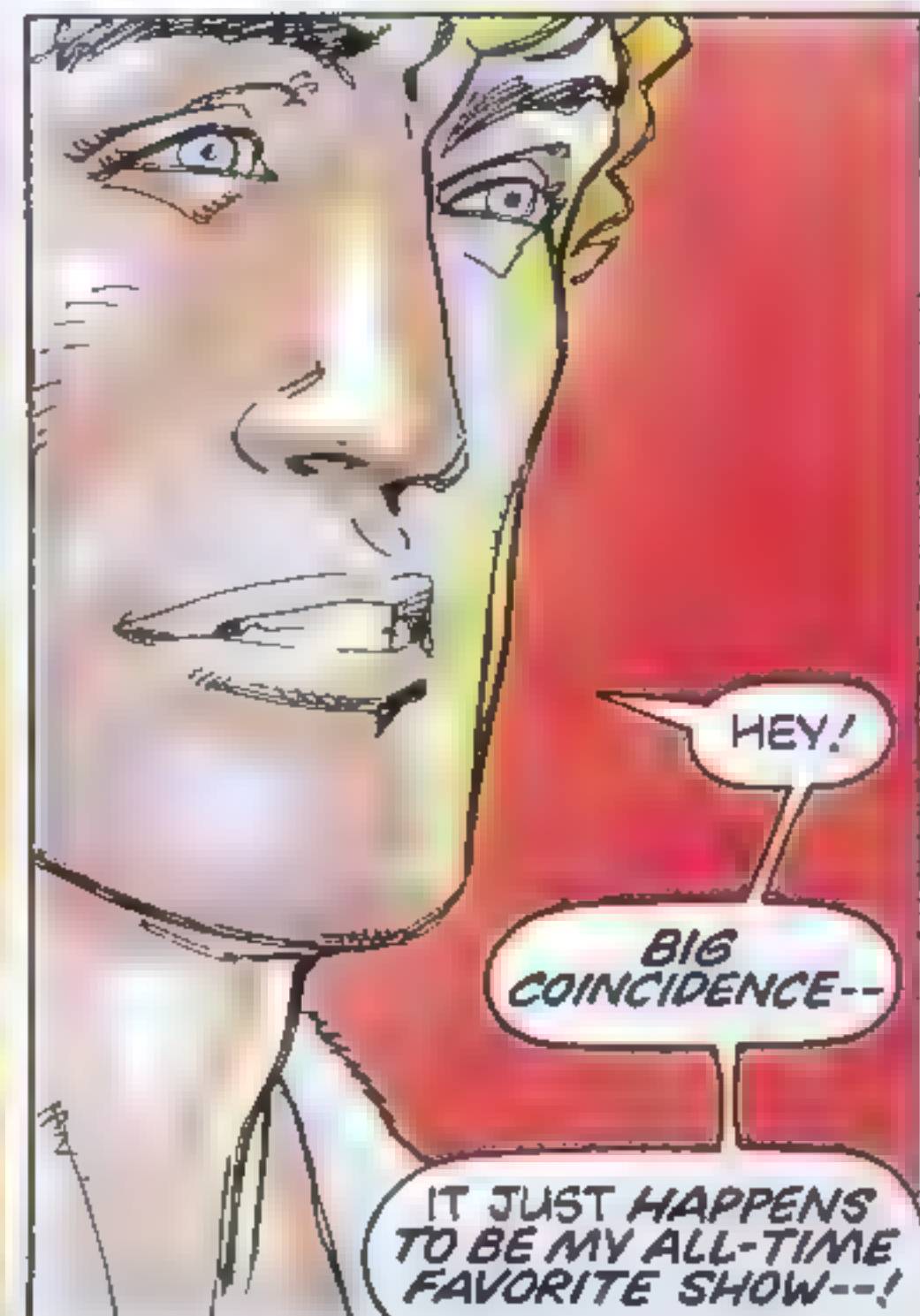
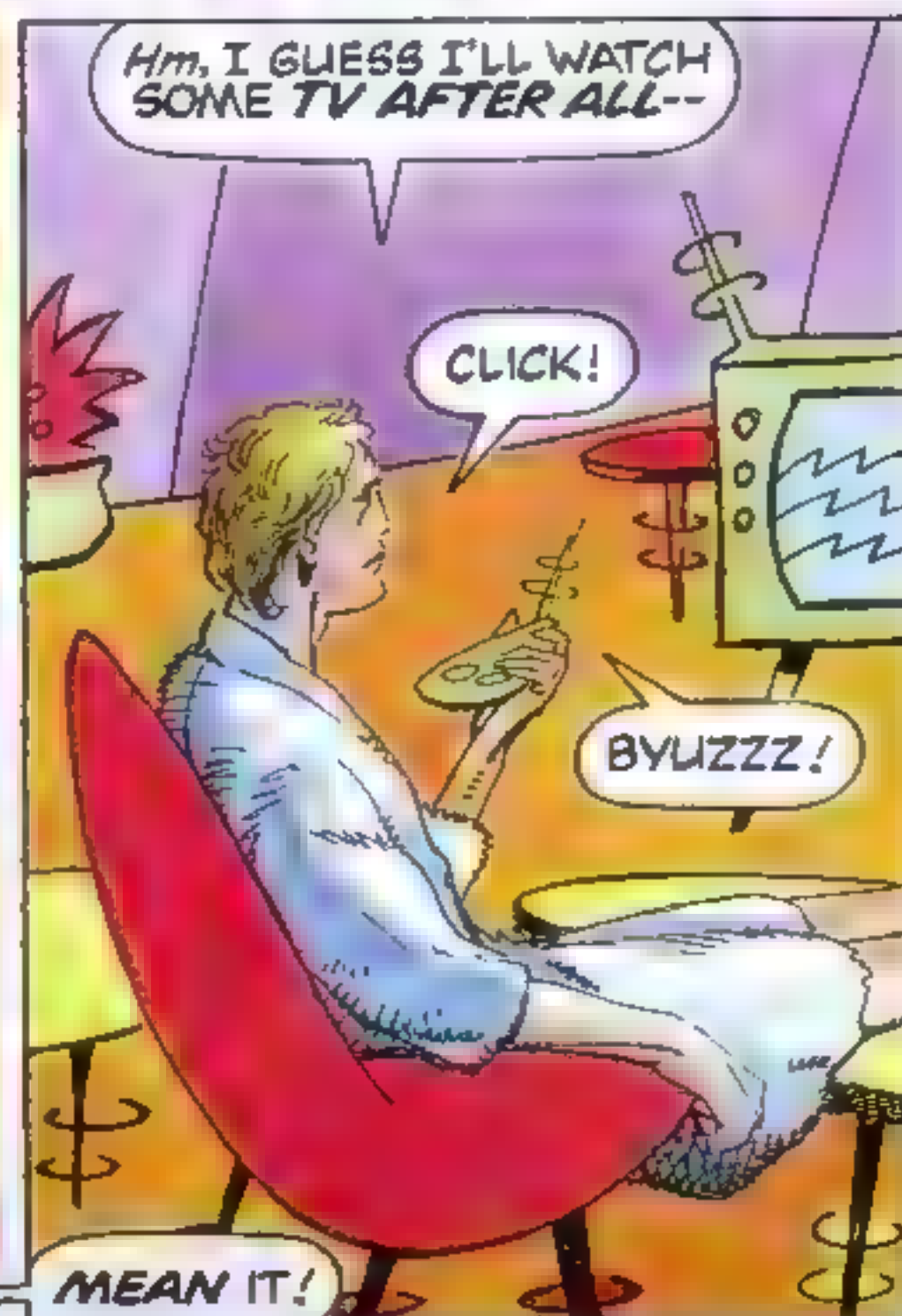
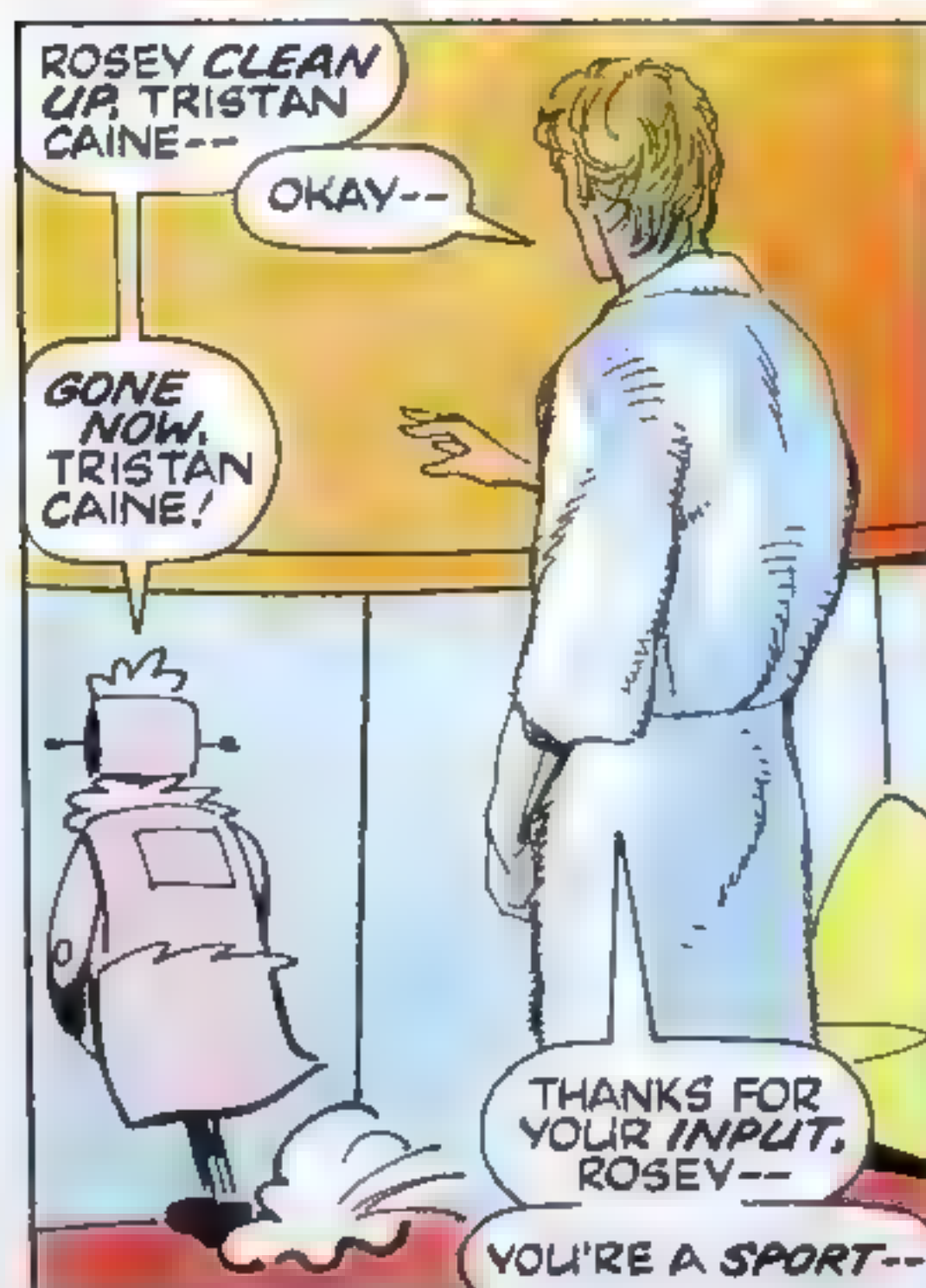
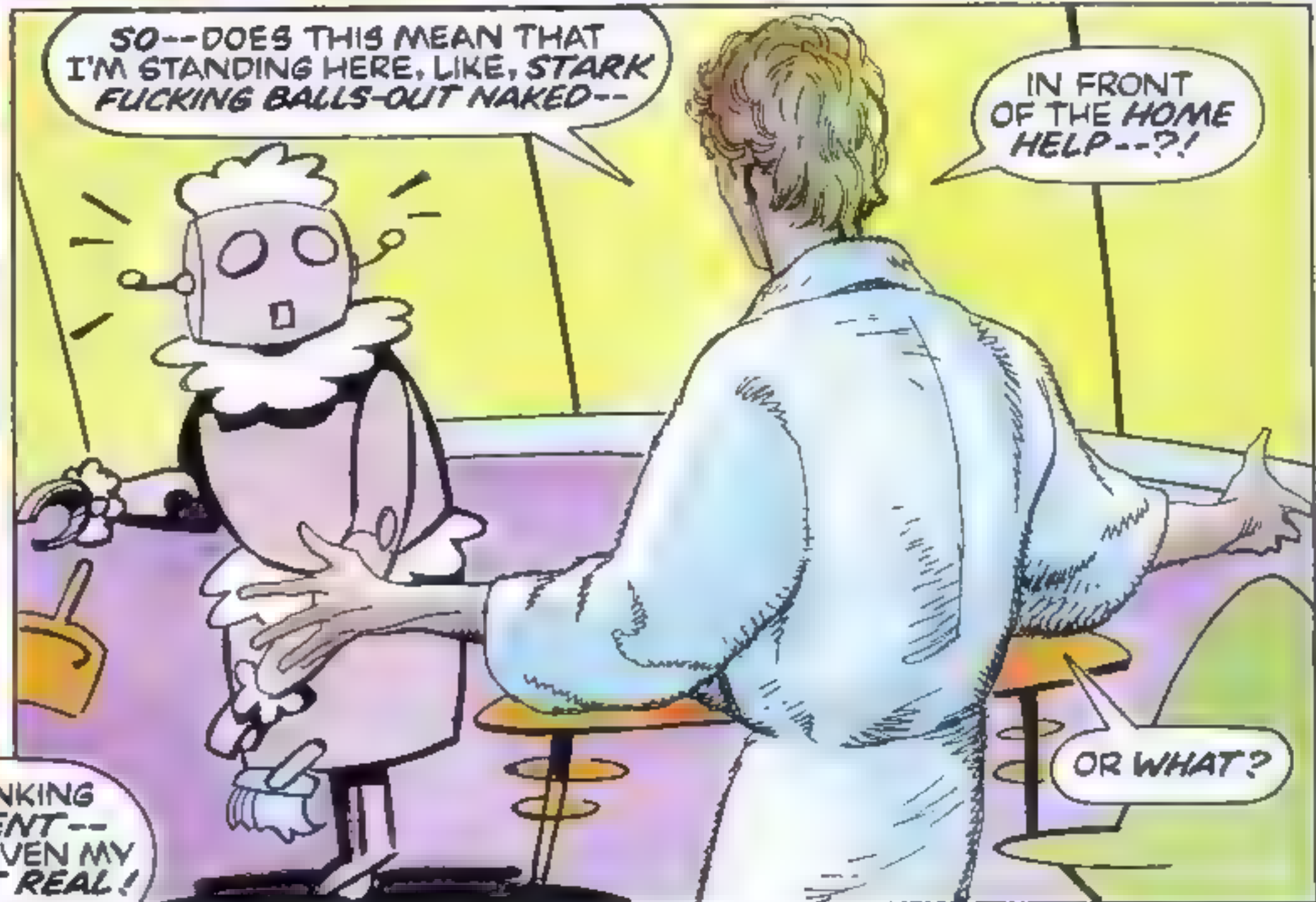
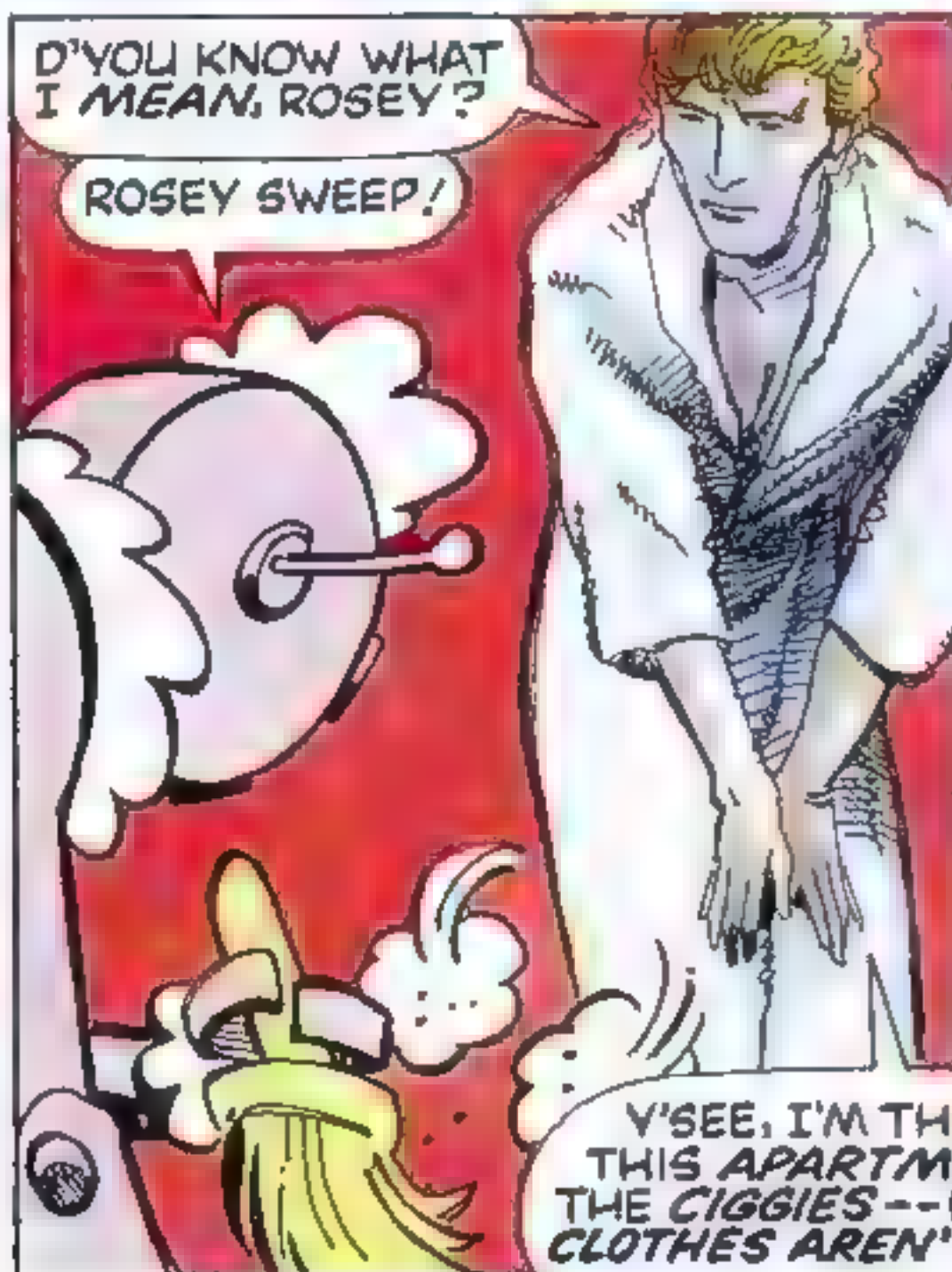
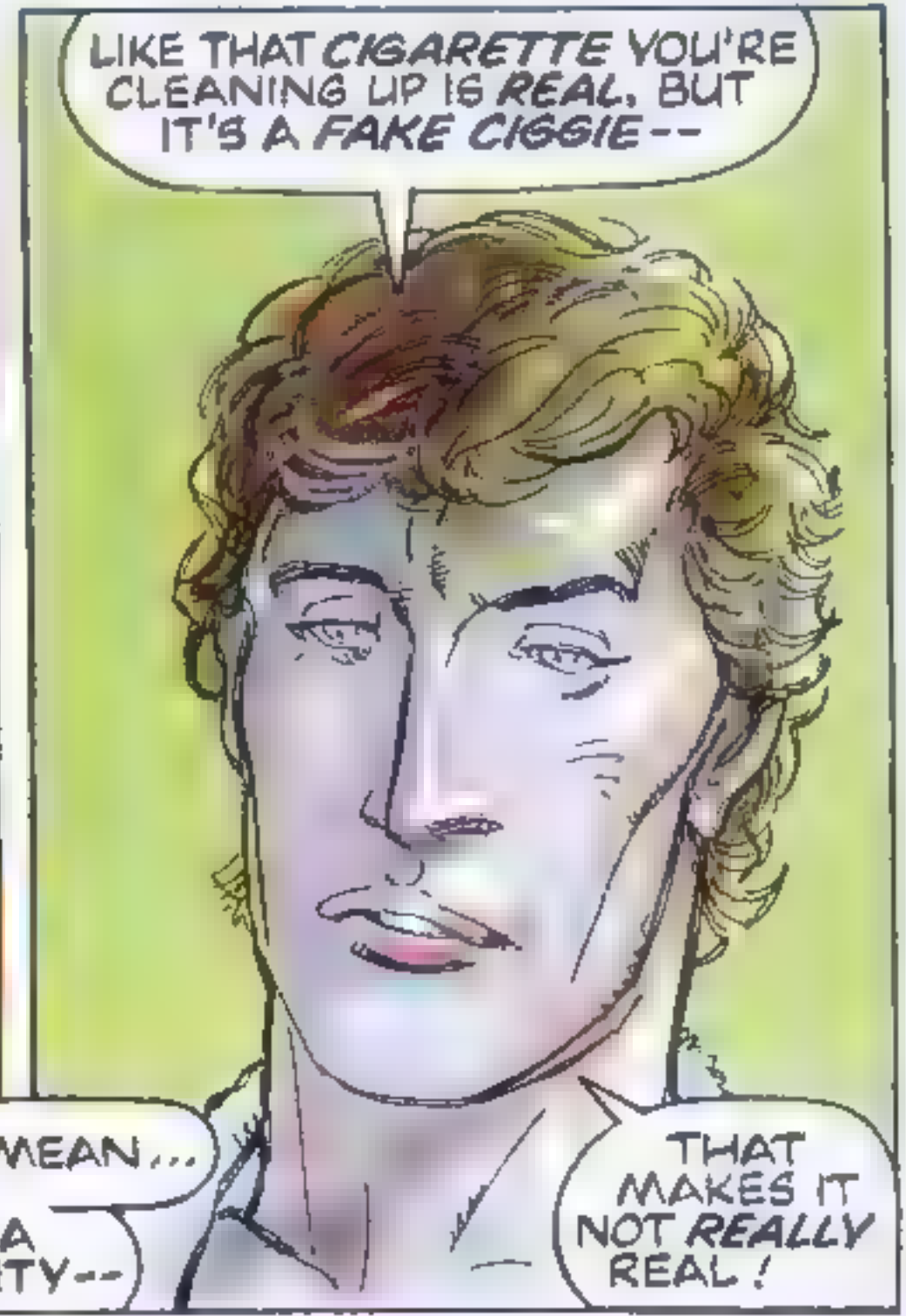
CLICK--

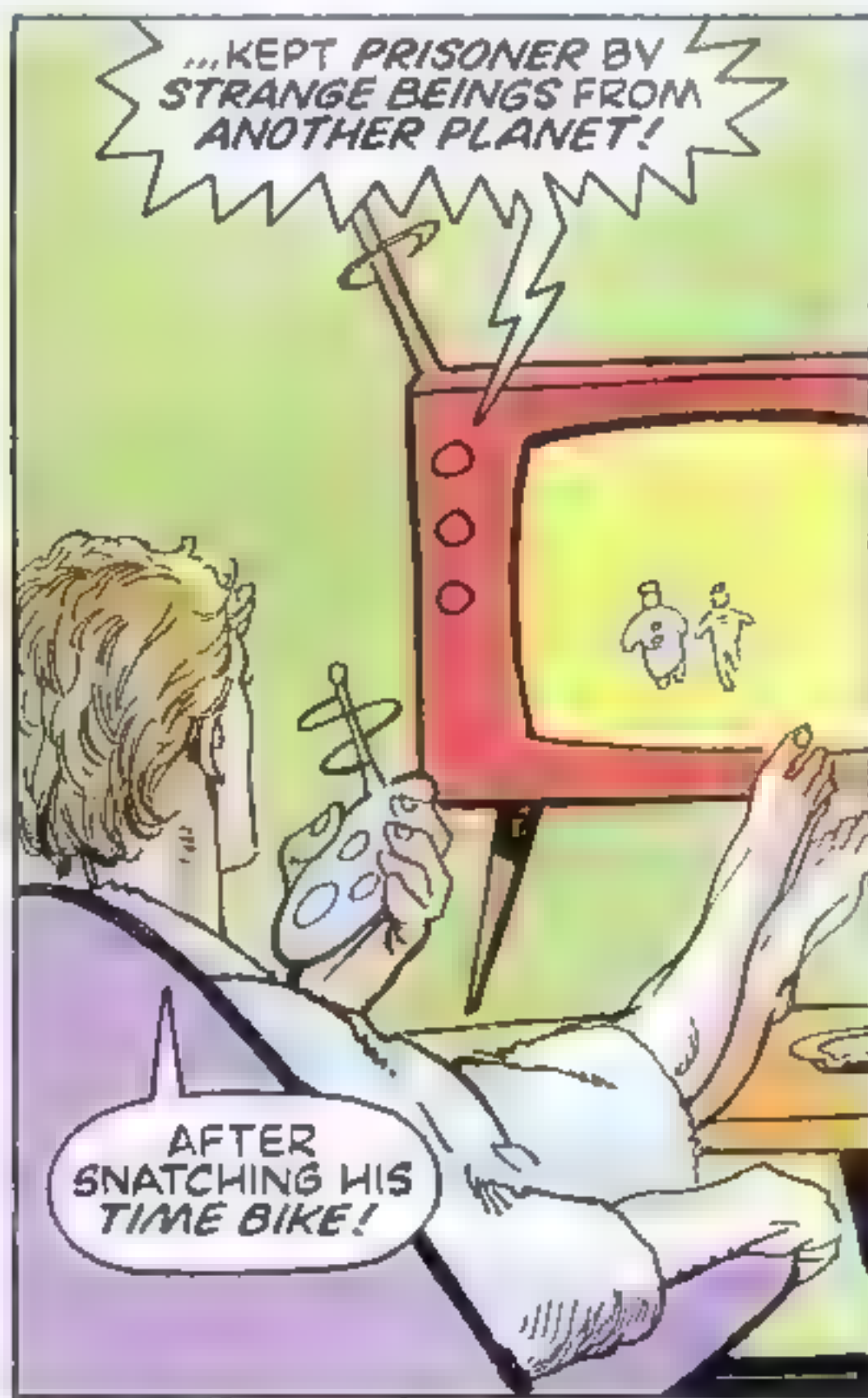
SUCK--

PUFF,
MIND GAMES.

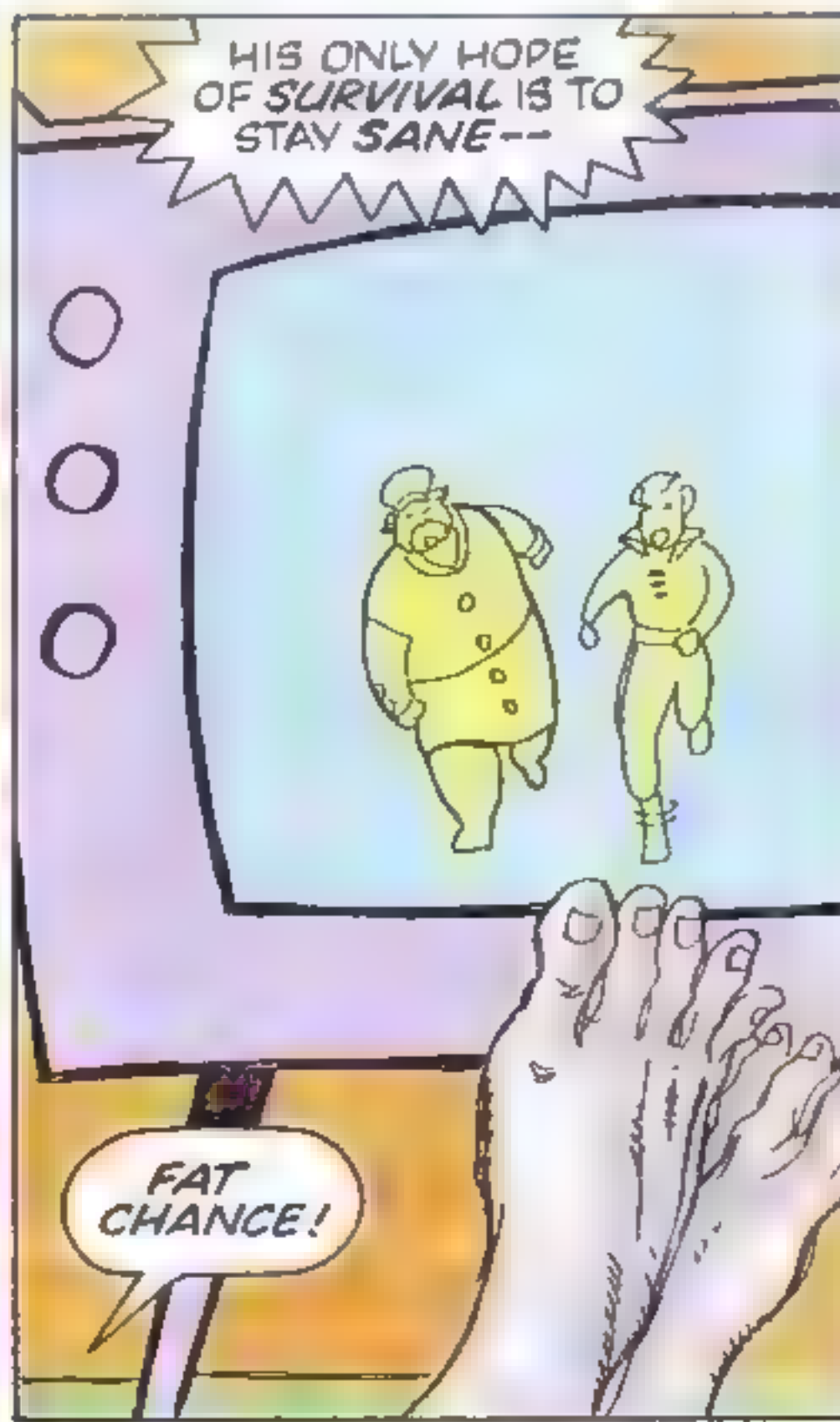
I... SPY...
WITH MY LITTLE EYE...







...KEPT PRISONER BY STRANGE BEINGS FROM ANOTHER PLANET!



HIS ONLY HOPE OF SURVIVAL IS TO STAY SANE--

FAT CHANCE!



IN THE INSANE WORLD OF... THE PARADOXMAN!

PARA-DOX-MA-A-AN NANA NANA NAH NAH



C'MON, DAVA--

TRYUM, TRIS!

C'MON--JUST A FEW MORE STEPS--!

YOU'LL BE OKAY--

I'M DRAGGING THIS POOR BASTARD ALONG--

I GOT NO IDEA HIS LEFT LEG IS BROKEN IN TWO PLACES JUST BELOW THE HIP--

I ONLY FIND OUT ABOUT THAT LATER--

RIGHT NOW I'M JUST TRYING TO GET HIM AWAY FROM THE SONS-OF-BITCHES WHO WANT TO KILL HIM!

Uhhn--

UHHT!

S'OKAY, GUY, GOTCHA WEIGHT--C'MON, UP--UP!

HIS EX-PALS HAD FOLLOWED ME UP TO THE MAIN CONCOURSE WHERE I'D FOUND DAVA HIDING, ALL BEATEN UP.

THEY THOUGHT THEY'D KILLED HIM DAYS AGO, BUT HE'D SURVIVED--

NOW THEY WANTED TO GIVE IT ANOTHER TRY AND DO THE JOB RIGHT--

SO WE'RE BOTH RUNNING SHITLESS THROUGH THE STREETS OF OLD DOWNTOWN--

IN HERE. C'MON --IN HERE!

'CAUSE IF THEY GET TO HIM, THEY'LL GET ME TOO--

WE FIND SHADOWS AND CRAWL INTO THEM--

STOPPING DEAD STILL INSIDE THE DARK.

I'M BREATHLESS AND SWEAT'S SPEWING OUT OF ME--

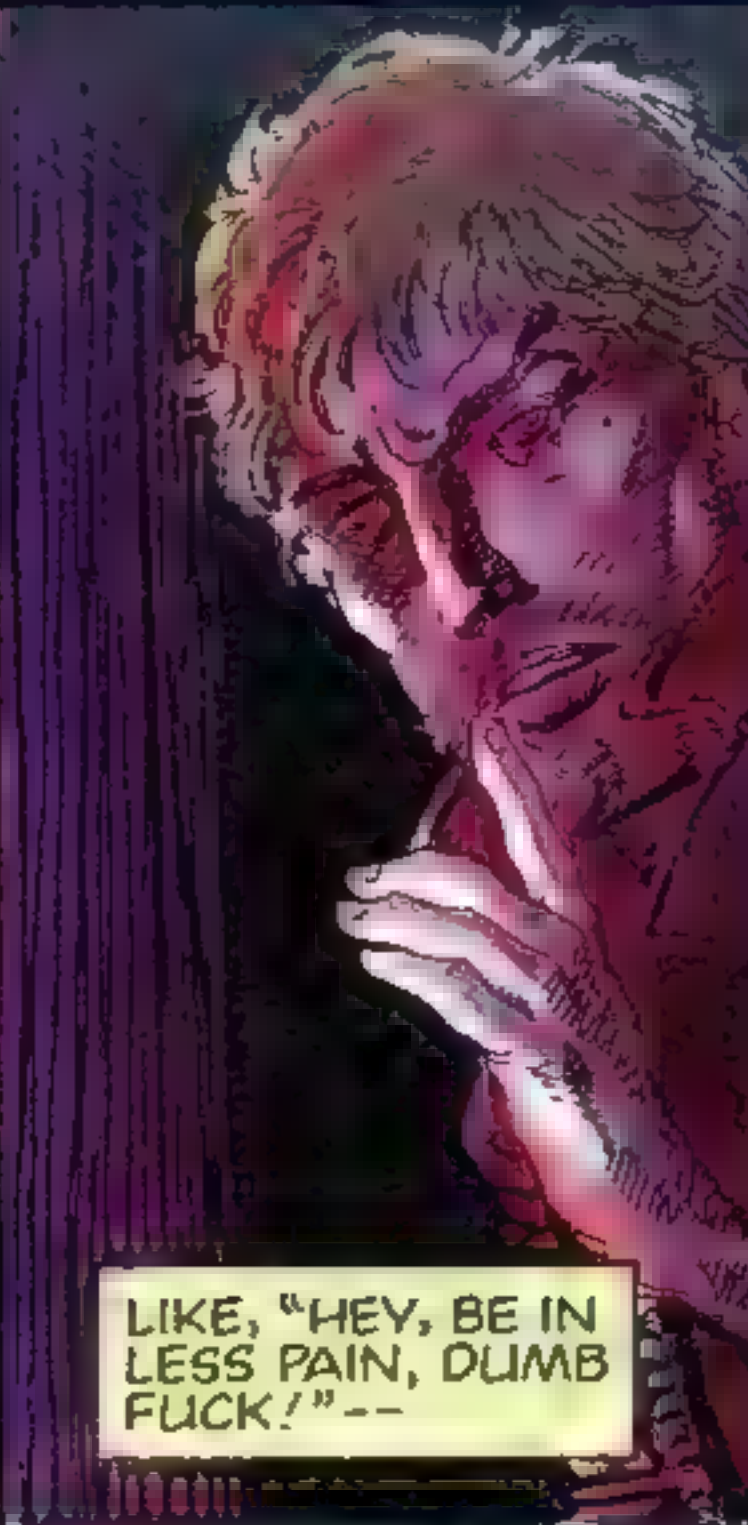
I'M NOT USED TO RUNNING, BUT DAVA'S WORSE OFF THAN ME--



HE'S WHEEZING
HARD...AND LOUD--

HE'S IN AGONY,
BUT I DON'T
KNOW THAT--

SO I'M MOTIONING
TO BE QUIET--



LIKE, "HEY, BE IN
LESS PAIN, DUMB
FUCK!"--



BUT DAVA
NODS BACK TO
ME AND GOES
SILENT.

IN RETROSPECT, IT'S A
WONDER HE WASN'T
SCREAMING HIS HEAD
OFF ALL ALONG.



I CAN HEAR THE BASTARDS
GETTING CLOSER NOW--

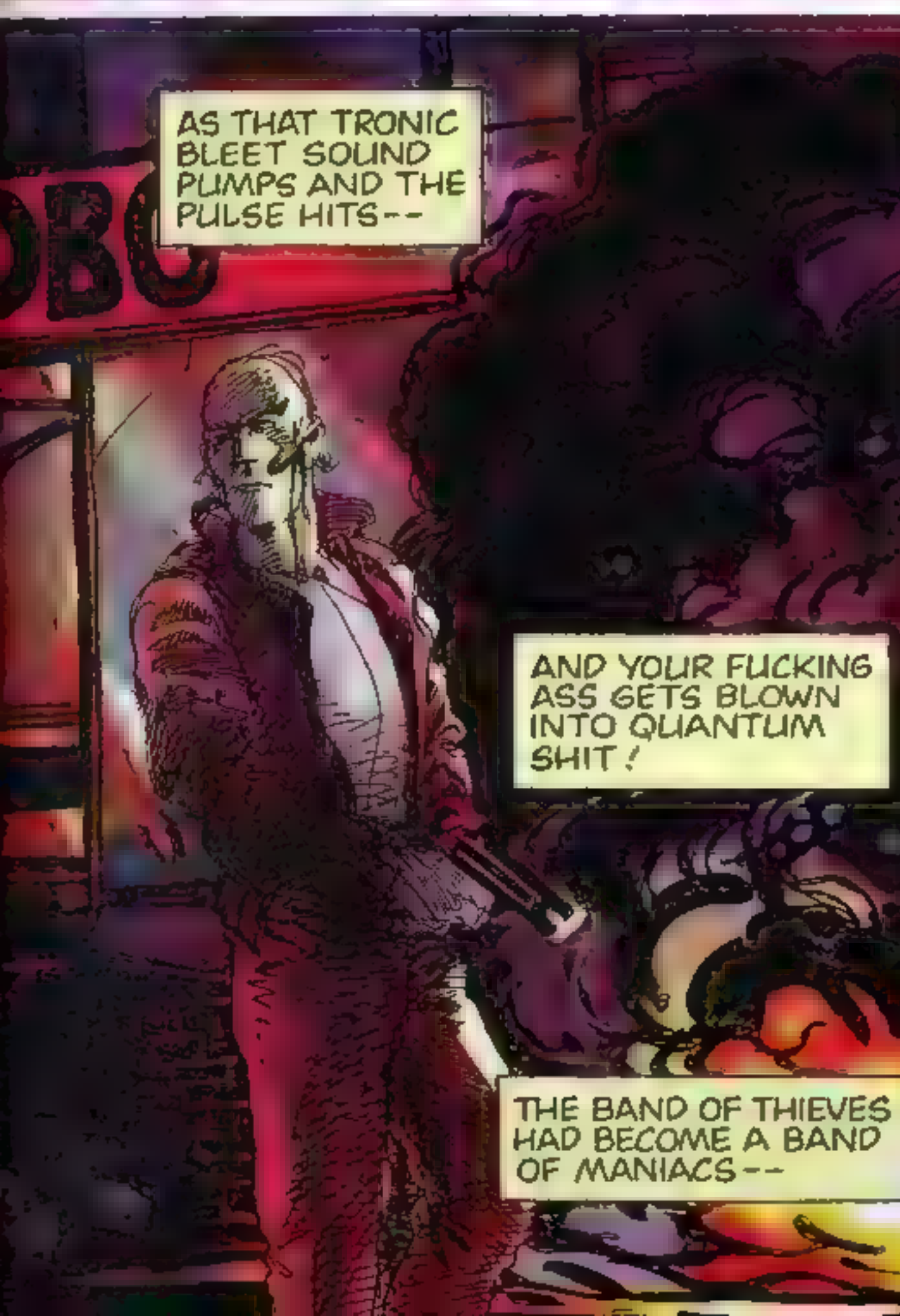
THEY'RE CALLING TO EACH OTHER--

AND I HEAR
THAT QUEER
SOUND OF
WHATEVER IT
IS THAT MAKES
A PULSE GUN
WORK--

A SORT OF WHINING,
SUCKING SOUND THAT
IF YOU'RE LUCKY'S A
WARNING TO DUCK--



THEN KABOOM--!



AS THAT TRONIC
BLEET SOUND
PUMPS AND THE
PULSE HITS--

AND YOUR FUCKING
ASS GETS BLOWN
INTO QUANTUM
SHIT!

THE BAND OF THIEVES
HAD BECOME A BAND
OF MANIACS--



AND ARMED TO THE
TEETH WITH STUFF
THEY MUST'VE STOLEN
FROM WILLY, THEY WERE
OUT TO MURDER ONE
OF THEIR OWN--

NOT TO
MENTION
...ME!

ALL THIS CRAZINESS OVER ONE STUPID TCC CHIP. GO FIGURE.

THEY'RE AMBLING PAST US, OUT ON THE STREET--

I'M BREATHING AS SHALLOW AS A BIRD.

DAVA IS CLENCHING HIS TEETH, TEARS AND BLOOD RUNNING DOWN HIS BASHED-IN FACE--

THERE'S THIS DRY, RED, IRRADIATED DUST EVERYWHERE, IT'S IN MY EYES AND MOUTH AND BEFORE I KNOW IT--

MY THROAT CLAMPS--

THE GUY TURNS AND FIRES INTO THE SHADOWS, AIMING AT THE NOISE--

AND I LET OUT THIS DRY COUGH--

SHIT--!

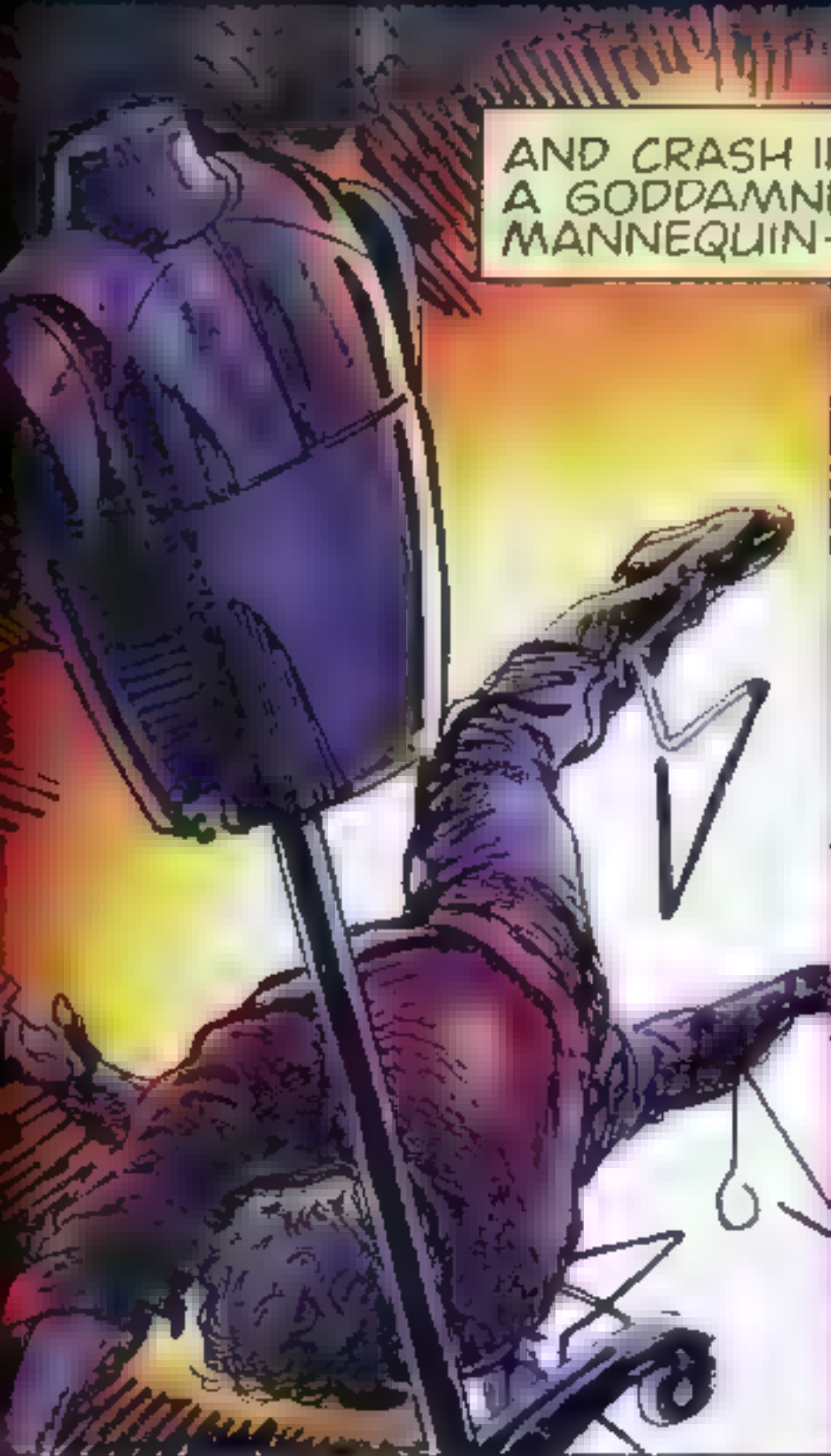
AND THE WALL BEHIND ME BLOWS APART WITH ONE GREAT MOTHER-FUCKING FLASH!

I HEAR THE PULSE WHINING, HE'S GOING TO FIRE AGAIN--

TRIS!

I KNOW I HAFTA GET AWAY FROM THAT SPOT--

I LAUNCH MYSELF HALF ACROSS THE ROOM--!



AND CRASH INTO
A GODDAMNED
MANNEQUIN--



WHICH CAREENS
OUT OF THE
SHADOWS TOWARD
THE WINDOW--



THE GUY BLASTS IT TO
SMITHEREENS--THOUSANDS
OF TINY FIREFLY BITS
ALL OVER THE PLACE.



I'M LAYING IN
THE MIDDLE OF
THE ROOM, HALF
IN, HALF OUT OF
THE SHADOWS--

THE GUY'S SHOUTING,
"I GOT HIM"--HE
THINKS THE MANNEQUIN
WAS DAVA, OR ME.

FUKKIN
BLAHNEM
T'SHAT!

"BLOWN HIM
TO SHIT!"

SAYS YOU,
ASSHOLE!

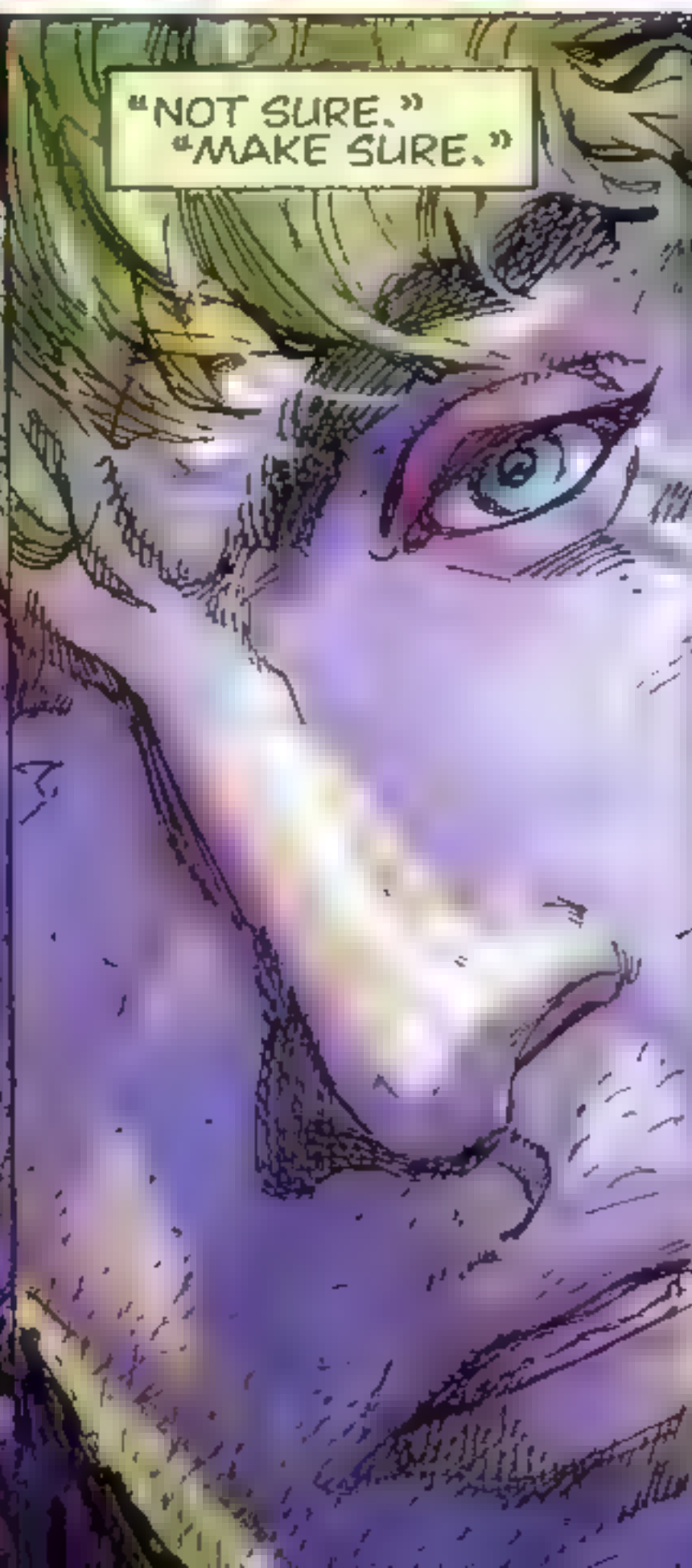
MY LUNGS FEEL LIKE
PORCUPINES IN MY CHEST
AND I WANNA CHOKE BUT
I CAN'T-- I WANNA TAKE A
BREATH BUT I'M AFRAID TO
MOVE A FUCKING MUSCLE.

ARGAHDUM!



WHAT'RE THEY
SAYING? "WHERE'S
THE LITTLE ONE?"

--ME.



"NOT SURE."
"MAKE SURE."



"BLOW THE WHOLE
PLACE APART...
BE SURE--"

"BE SURE--"

BLOW THE WHOLE
FUCKING PLACE!

SHEER PANIC!

YAAAA!

Uhh!

SUDDENLY I'M
FLYING AT THEM
LIKE A FUCKING
ROCKET--!

YELLING AND
FLAILING ABOUT,
I'M THRASHING
LIKE A FUCKING
MAD ANIMAL!

WE ALL TUMBLE AT ONCE
AND AS I HIT THE SIDE-
WALK I SUDDENLY REALIZE
WHAT I'M DOING--!

CRAZY SHIT YA DO WHEN
THERE'S NOTHING TO LOSE!

THERE'S A GUN,
RIGHT THERE--

I GRAB IT!

IT WEIGHS A FUCKING TON
AND I HAVE TO CLUTCH
IT WITH BOTH HANDS!

I'M ON MY FEET
AND IT'S PUMPING
LIKE A PISTON--

THE FIRST COUPLE OF BLASTS PUSH ME
BACKWARDS AND I ALMOST BLOW
BOTH MY FUCKING LEGS OFF--!

BUT I KEEP
PUMPING THE
TRIGGER--

AND SHIT'S FLVING
ALL OVER THE PLACE!

K-KKK!

HEY!

KK-K-K!

SON OF A BITCH!

I WAS
JUST GETTING
INTO THAT!



CHRIST--!

WOULDN'T
Y'JUST BLOODY
KNOW IT!

HEY!

HEYYY!

I'M TRYING TO HAVE SOME
QUALITY TIME, HERE!

HE-E-EV--!

WOULD
YOU SHUT
THE FUCK--

LI-U-UPPP!

HEY.

Oh, HI.

S'UNEXPECTED?

CAN I
COME IN?

SURE. WELCOME
TO MY OWN LITTLE
SHANGRI-LA.

WHAT'S
UP?

NEED TO TALK.



HERE, GOTCHA
SOME STUFF--

GREAT!

BOTTLE O'
VODKA--

WOW, THANKS.

WHOLE CARTON O'
MARLBOROS--

HARPER'S AND
TIME MAGAZINE,
BOTH REAL, BOTH
CURRENT--

Oh, yeh, and--



TWO SHIRTS AND
A PAIR OF
PANTS.

HOW COME?

LIKE YOU FEARED,
TRIS.

YOU MEAN I
REALLY AM
NAKED?

SHIT!
WHAT'RE
THE FUCKING
ALIENS TRY-
ING TO DO
TO ME?

THIS'S REALLY
EMBARRASSING!

YEAH, WELL,
IT'S NOT DE-
LIBERATE.



THEY JUST WORK
ON A DIFFERENT
PLANE OF
REALITY
TO YOU
AND ME.

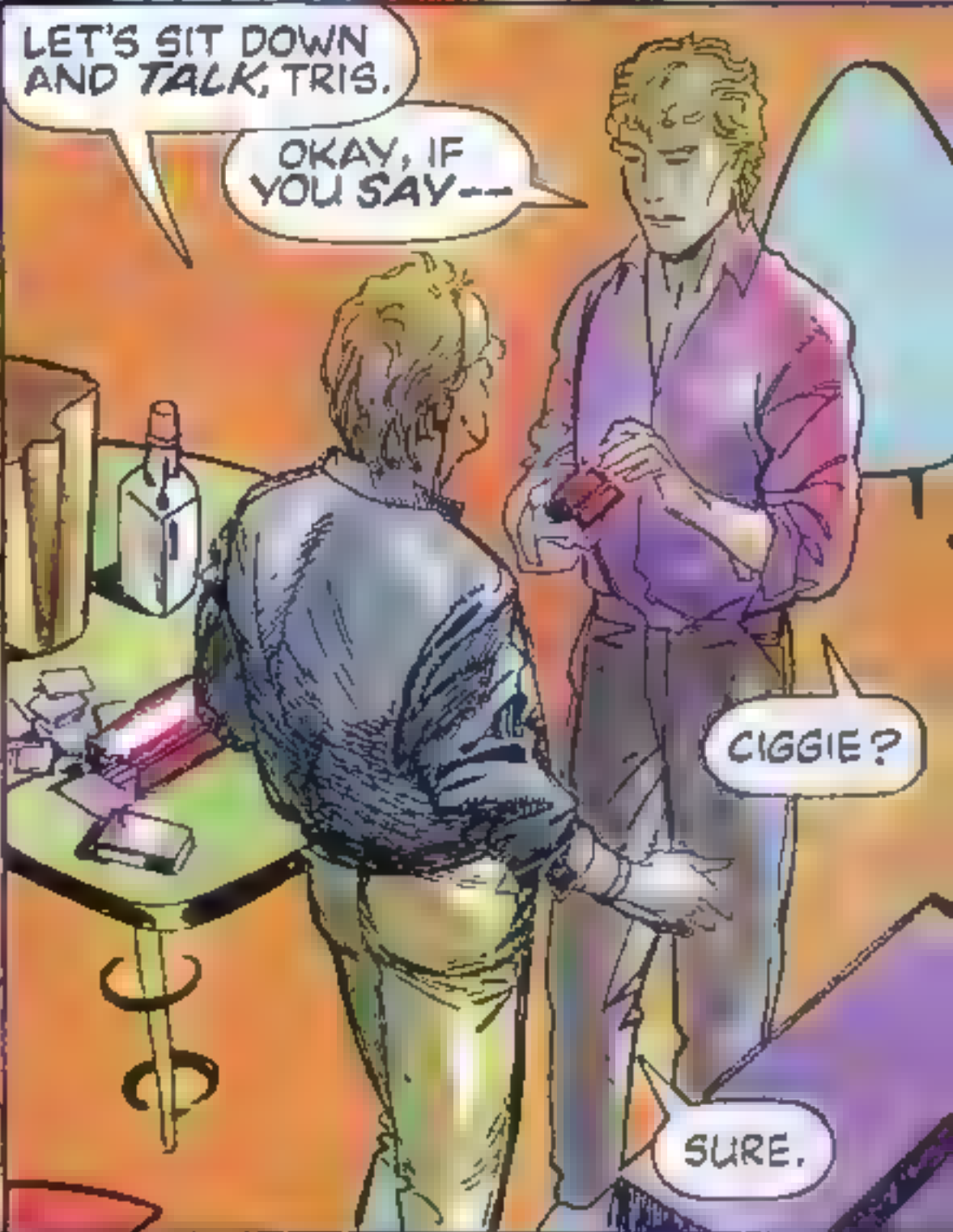
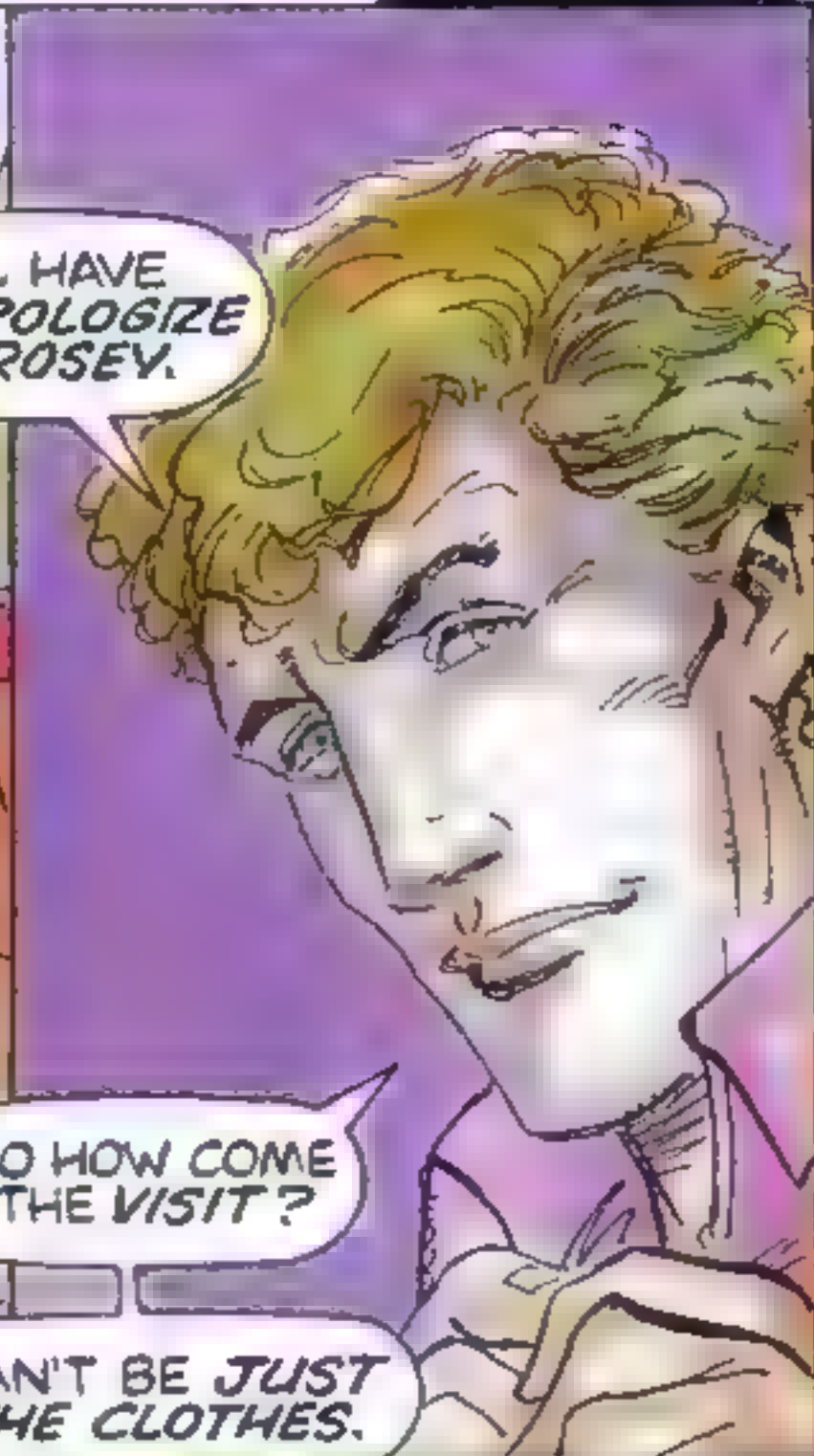
THESE'RE
FINE,
THANKS.

WHAT'S REAL TO
THEM IS JUST SO
MUCH SCOTCH
MIST TO US.

I'LL HAVE
TO APOLOGIZE
TO ROSEY.

SO HOW COME
THE VISIT?

CAN'T BE JUST
THE CLOTHES.

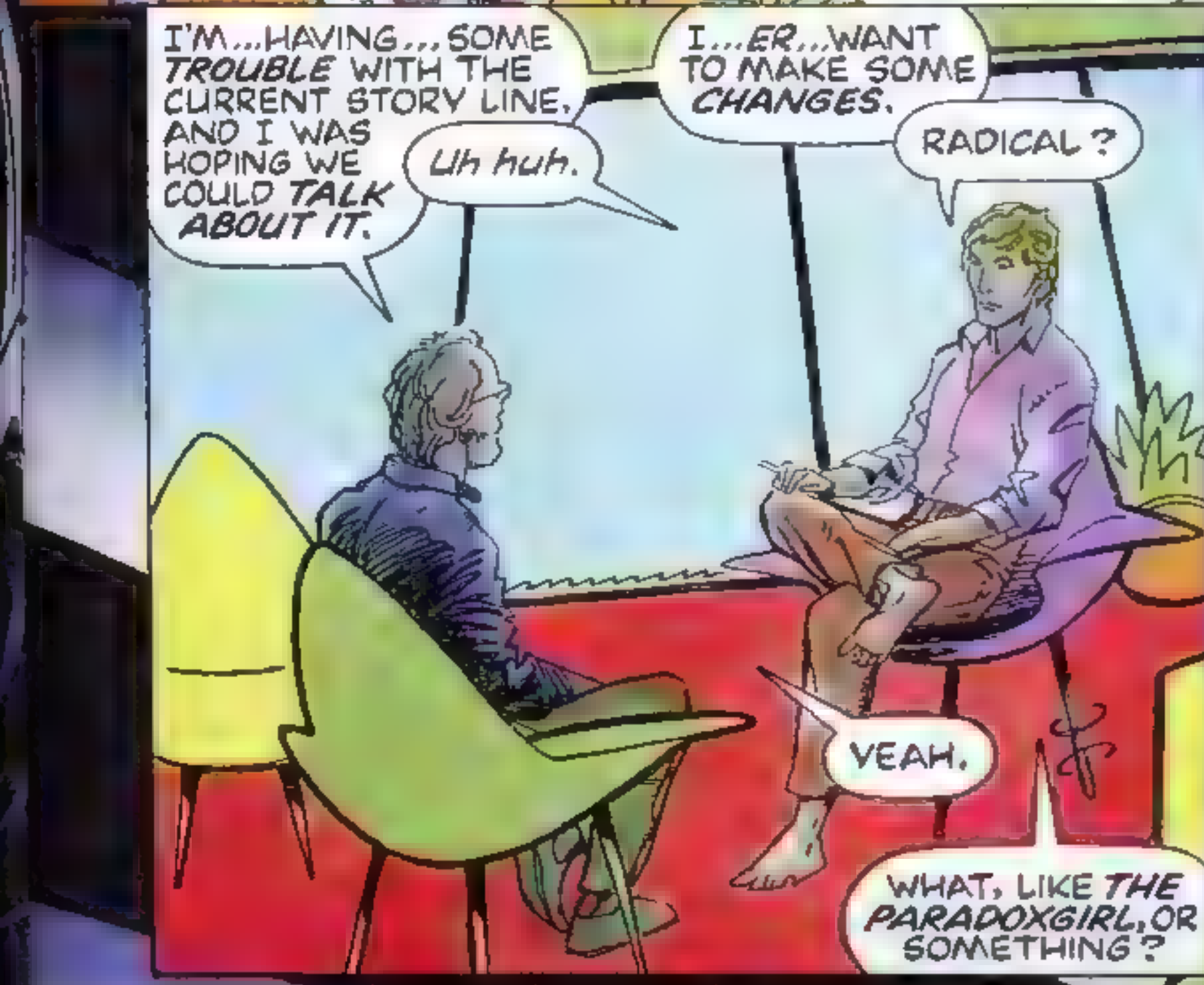


LET'S SIT DOWN
AND TALK, TRIS.

OKAY, IF
YOU SAY--

CIGGIE?

SURE.



I'M...HAVING...SOME
TROUBLE WITH THE
CURRENT STORY LINE,
AND I WAS
HOPING WE
COULD TALK
ABOUT IT.

Uh huh.

I...ER...WANT
TO MAKE SOME
CHANGES.

RADICAL?

YEAH.

WHAT, LIKE THE
PARADOXGIRL, OR
SOMETHING?



Heh, NO--
YOU'VE STILL
GOT THE JOB,
TRIS--

WHAT I WANNA DO IS
CHUCK OUT THE WHOLE
CONTINUITY...AND
START OVER AGAIN.

SHIT!
Y'SURE?

NO, THAT'S WHY WE
SHOULD TALK...

OKAY?

--END CHAPTER EIGHT

PREVIOUSLY IN

Shahariza is at once the most magnificent and the most corrupt city of the ancient worlds. It is fitting therefore that the eternally opposing forces of darkness and the mortal champions of light have converged at this spired epicenter of glory.

The most sinister figure of Shahariza's many legends bears a name unspeakable by lawful decree: that name is Ammon-Gra. A creature of fire and fang, it had all but brought the city to flaming ruin when Axis the Great and his Red Legionnaires strode into the fray and, with many men lost in the hellfire battle, destroyed the beast with raw sinew and steel before seeing it fall into the stygian mass of the Earth's inner belly some thirty years gone.

Today, while Axis enjoys a boozy, lazy retirement from his fighting days, the feared and forbidden name of Ammon-Gra has returned to the lips of a few wary men.

Aran Ana-Kashan, haunted by supernatural visions of Ammon's fiery rebirth, has come to the jeweled city seeking Axis' help to thwart such a dreaded resurrection. But the twice-souled warlock known as Uta-Prime has already set the wheels of new life turning inside the carcass of the once-buried fire beast.

Thus shall the destinies of hero and villain cross when comes their fateful time. 

But, for tonight at least, Axis is willfully oblivious of these developing shrouds of evil, as he and some friends party at the palace of the Almighty Kalif-Anuk, ruler of Shahariza...

THE FREEBOOTERS

FREEBOOTERS

THE SOOTHINGLY AROMATIC CINNAMON TEA IS BREWED, CHIEF.

DUNNO, I'M THINKING...

WHAT ARE WE ASKING FOR THIS TIME?

NICE PIECE OF POTTERY THIS, IT'LL GO WELL BEHIND THE BAR.

WHAT'D WE GET FOR THE WARM, COMFORTING YAK SKIN BLANKET?

ALL HORSE, CAMEL AND WAGON OBSTRUCTION CITATIONS CITY-WIDE WAS RE-VOKED, CHIEF.

CHAPTER NINE

ALRIGHT, FOR THE SOOTHING CINNAMON TEA I WANT...

LET'S SEE...

I.. WA-A-ANT...

I WANT ANOTHER TWO PERCENT, RIGHT OFF THE TOP, FROM EVERY SINGLE AXIS IMITATOR IN FIVE MILES OF PARADISE MARKET.

CHIEF SAYS WE WANTS

YES, YES-- I HEARD, YOU FOOL!

'ERE, THAT'S NOT NICE--

I'M ONLY FOLLOWING ORDERS--

'COS YOU TWO WON'T TALK.

SIMPLETON!

ALRIGHT, ALRIGHT --A FURTHER TWO PERCENT--

GIVE ME THE TEA!

WHERE'S THAT DAMNABLE PHYSIC I ASKED FOR?

CHIEF, THE AL-MIGHTY KALIF WANTS TO KNOW WHERE'S THE DAMNABLE PHYSIC.



WHAT SAY, SWIG?

COULDN'T HEAR YA OVER MY STOMACH GRIMBLIN'.

ASK IF THE ALMIGHTY KALIF HAS FOOD IN THE HOUSE.

CHIEF SAYS IT'S SNACK TIME.

CURIOUS...



AXUS--

YOU HUNGRY TOO, BLACJAG?

ALRIGHT, I RECKON ON GOAT KEBABS ALL 'ROUND.

CHIEF SAYS

AXUS, THERE IS SOMETHING AMISS HERE--



THERE WERE FOUR CORPSES WHEN I ENTERED THIS ROOM EARLIER THIS EVE... NOW THEY ARE GONE.

WHAT'S THAT TO DO WITH KEBABS?

TELL YOUR CAMEL-SPAWN CHIEF THAT IF HE DESIRES FOOD I SHALL GLADLY CARVE OFF HIS NUTS AND SERVE THEM TO HIM ON FLAMING SKEWERS.

GOTCHA.



MAYBE THEY WERE JUST WOUNDED ...AN' THEY CRAWLED OFF T'GET CONDIMENTS AND SIDE DISHES.

AXUS--

YOU AREN'T TAKING THIS SERIOUSLY--

THEY WERE VERY DEAD.



CHIEF, THE ALMIGHTY KALIF SAYS IF YOU WANT FOOD

NO, NO --FORGET THAT--

TELL YOUR CHIEF THAT THE ALMIGHTY KALIF SAW WHAT HAPPENED TO THE BODIES OF HIS SERVANTS.



CHIEF, THE ALMIGHTY

WHAT HAPPENED?

EH?

WHAT HAPPENED TO THE BODIES?

WHEN YOU SPEAK TO THE KALIF OF SHAHARIZA YOU SHALL ADDRESS HIM PROPERLY, NUBIAN.



ALRIGHT, SWIG, ASK THE KALIF WHAT

NO, I DON'T MEAN THAT--

I AM KALIF-ANUK! I AM ALMIGHTY RULER OF THE CITY AND STATE OF SHAHARIZA--



I EXPECT TO BE ADDRESSED WITH RESPECT BEFITTING MY TITLE--



AND YOU, NUBIAN, WILL ADDRESS ME AS... SIRE!

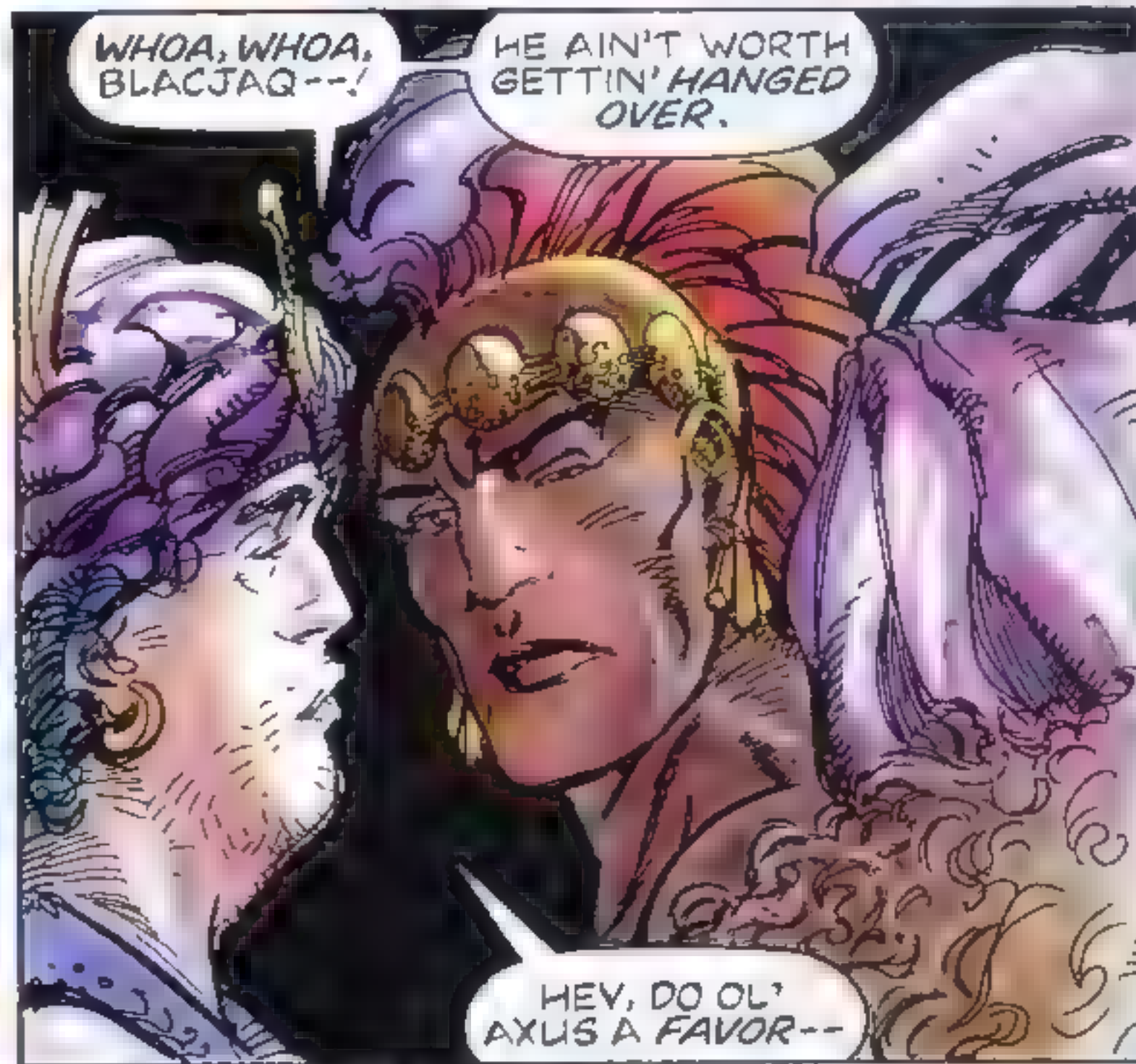


SWIG...

KINDLY TELL THE KALIF...

TO GO BUGGER HIMSELF.

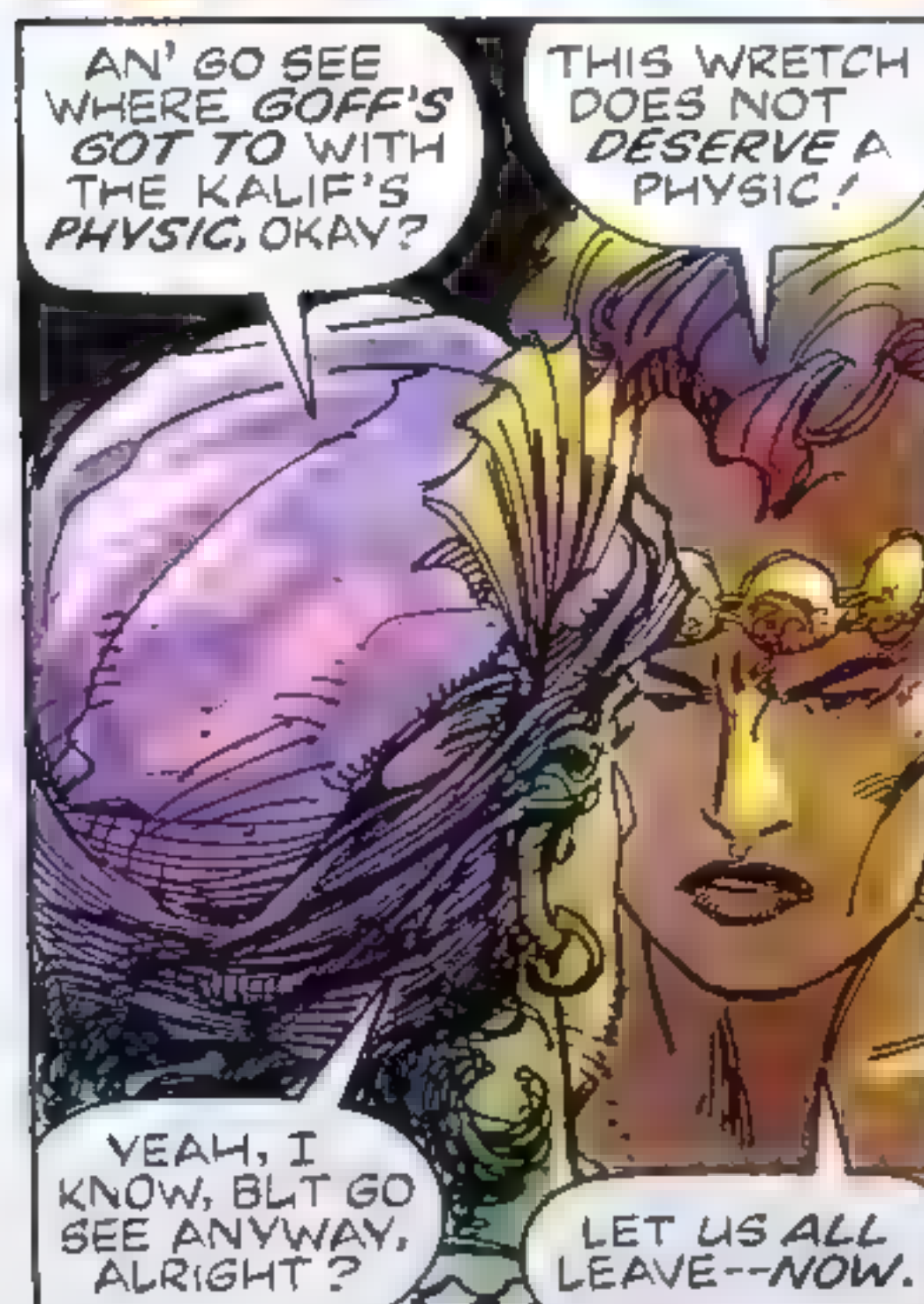
BLACK DOG!



WHOA, WHOA, BLACJAK--!

HE AIN'T WORTH GETTIN' HANGED OVER.

HEY, DO OL' AXUS A FAVOR--



AN' GO SEE WHERE GOFF'S GOT TO WITH THE KALIF'S PHYSIC, OKAY?

THIS WRETCH DOES NOT DESERVE A PHYSIC!

YEAH, I KNOW, BLT GO SEE ANYWAY, ALRIGHT?

LET US ALL LEAVE--NOW.



YEAH, SOON--

JUST A BIT MORE BUSI-
NESS--

WHY'N'TCHA WAIT IN THE GARDENS, WATCH FOR GOFF--

YOU, BLIND MAN--

MAKE YOUR MONARCH MORE TEA.

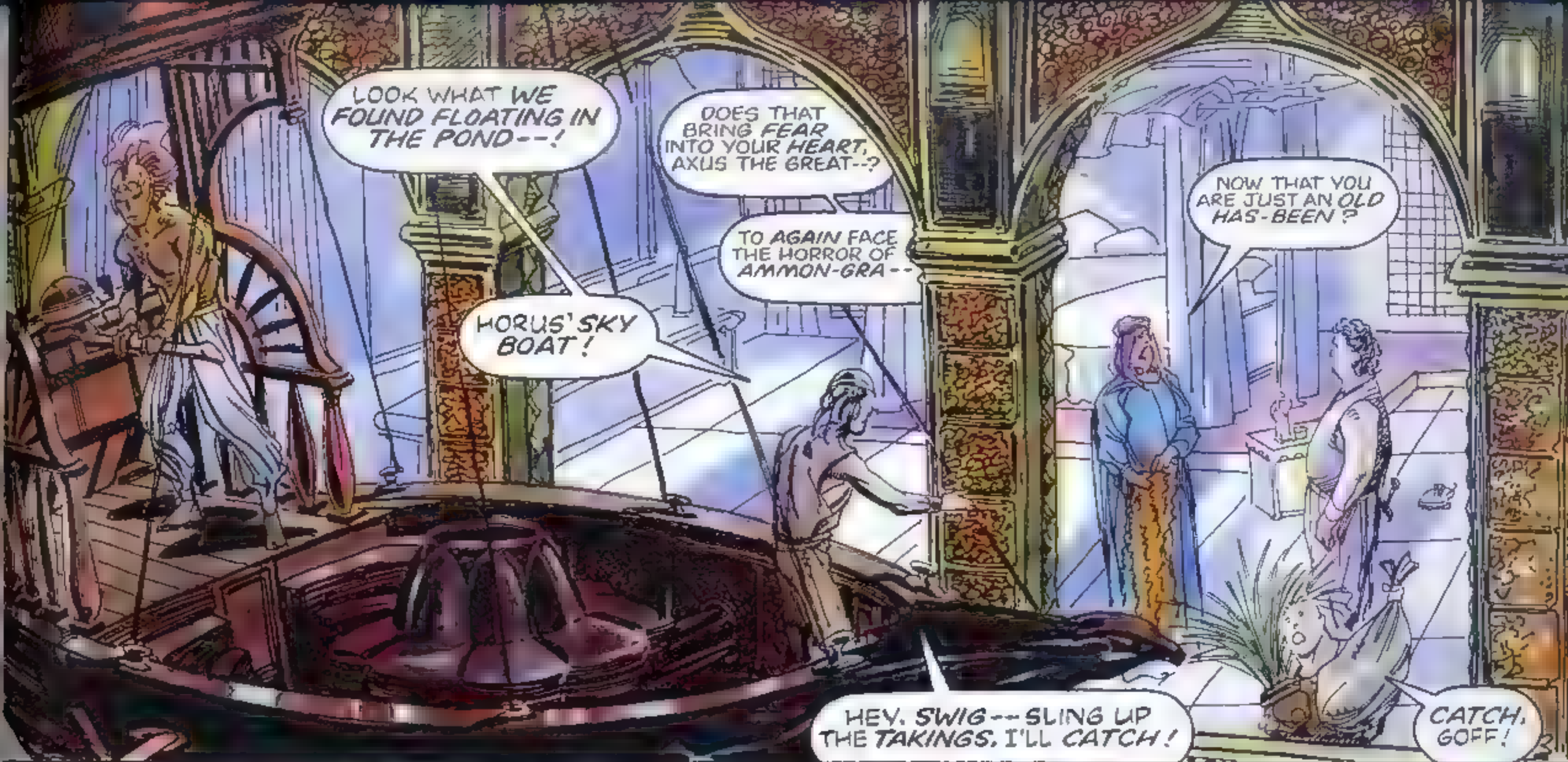


Y-YES...

SIRE.

SWIG--





LOOK WHAT WE
FOUND FLOATING IN
THE POND--!

DOES THAT
BRING FEAR
INTO YOUR HEART,
AXUS THE GREAT--?

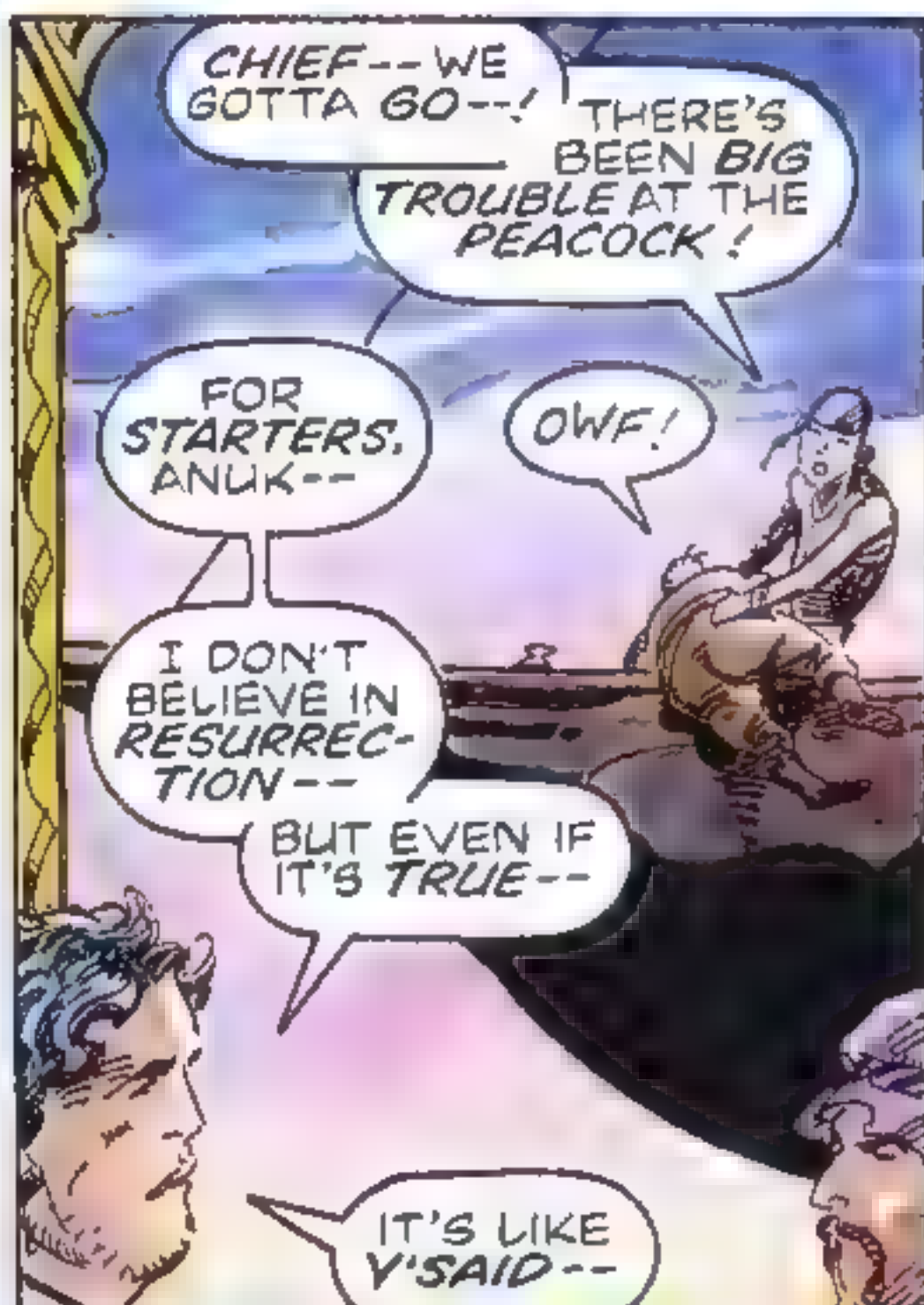
TO AGAIN FACE
THE HORROR OF
AMMON-GRA--

HORUS' SKY
BOAT!

NOW THAT YOU
ARE JUST AN OLD
HAS-BEEN?

HEY, SWIG-- SLING UP
THE TAKINGS, I'LL CATCH!

CATCH,
GOFF!



CHIEF-- WE
GOTTA GO--! THERE'S
BEEN BIG
TROUBLE AT THE
PEACOCK!

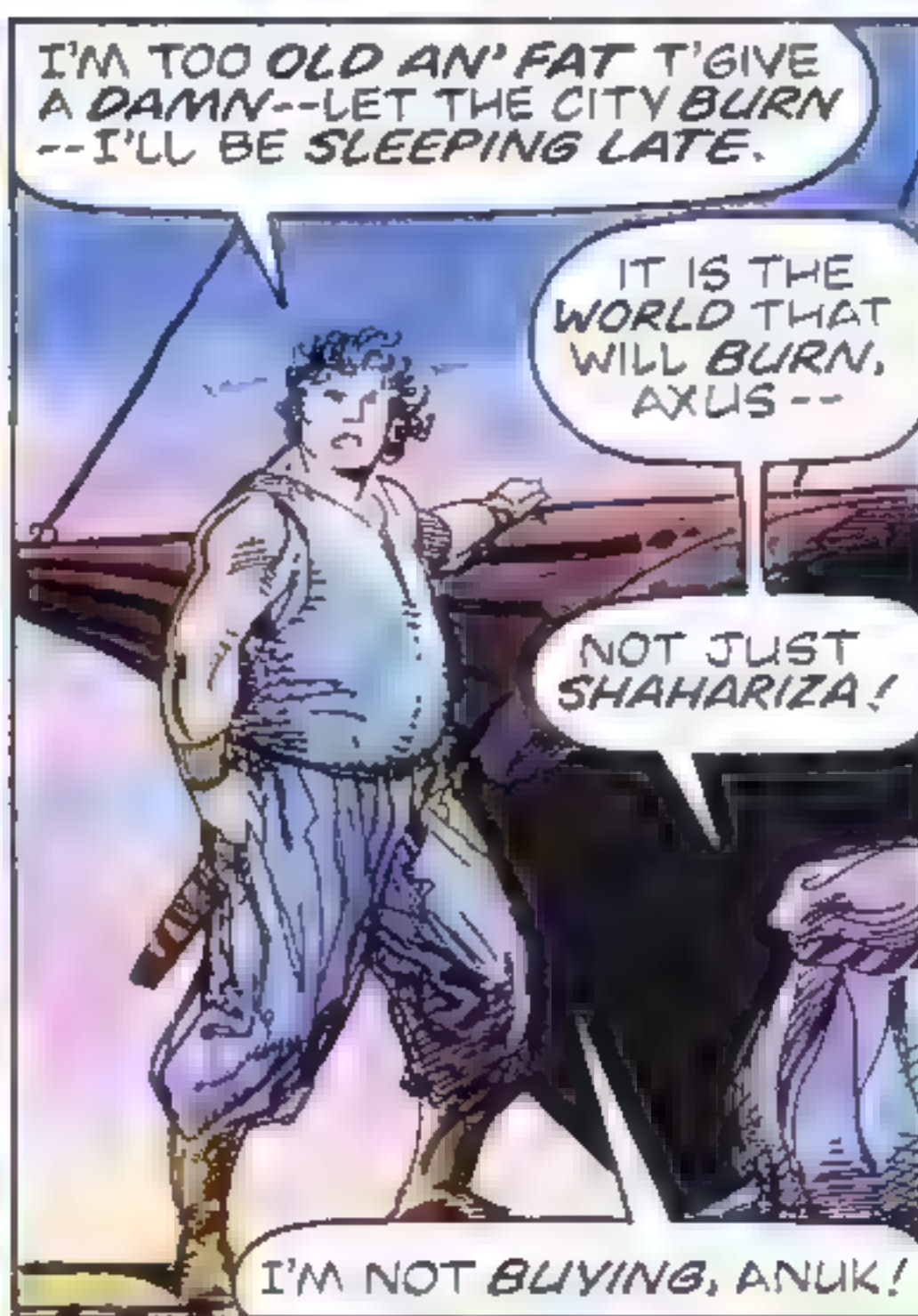
FOR
STARTERS.
ANUK--

OWF!

I DON'T
BELIEVE IN
RESURREC-
TION--

BUT EVEN IF
IT'S TRUE--

IT'S LIKE
Y SAID--



I'M TOO OLD AN' FAT T' GIVE
A DAMN-- LET THE CITY BURN
-- I'LL BE SLEEPING LATE.

IT IS THE
WORLD THAT
WILL BURN,
AXUS--

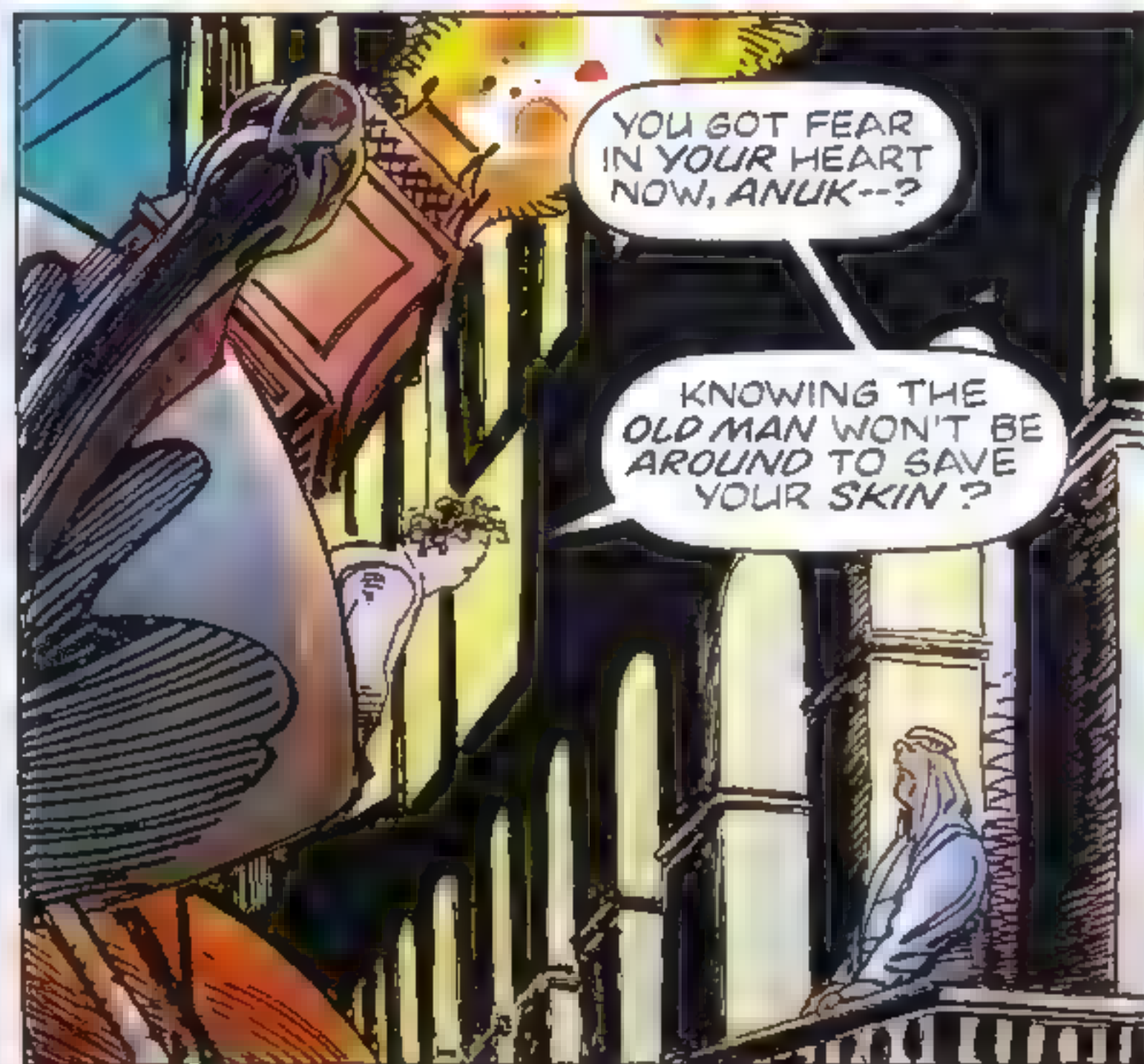
NOT JUST
SHAHARIZA!

I'M NOT BUYING, ANUK!



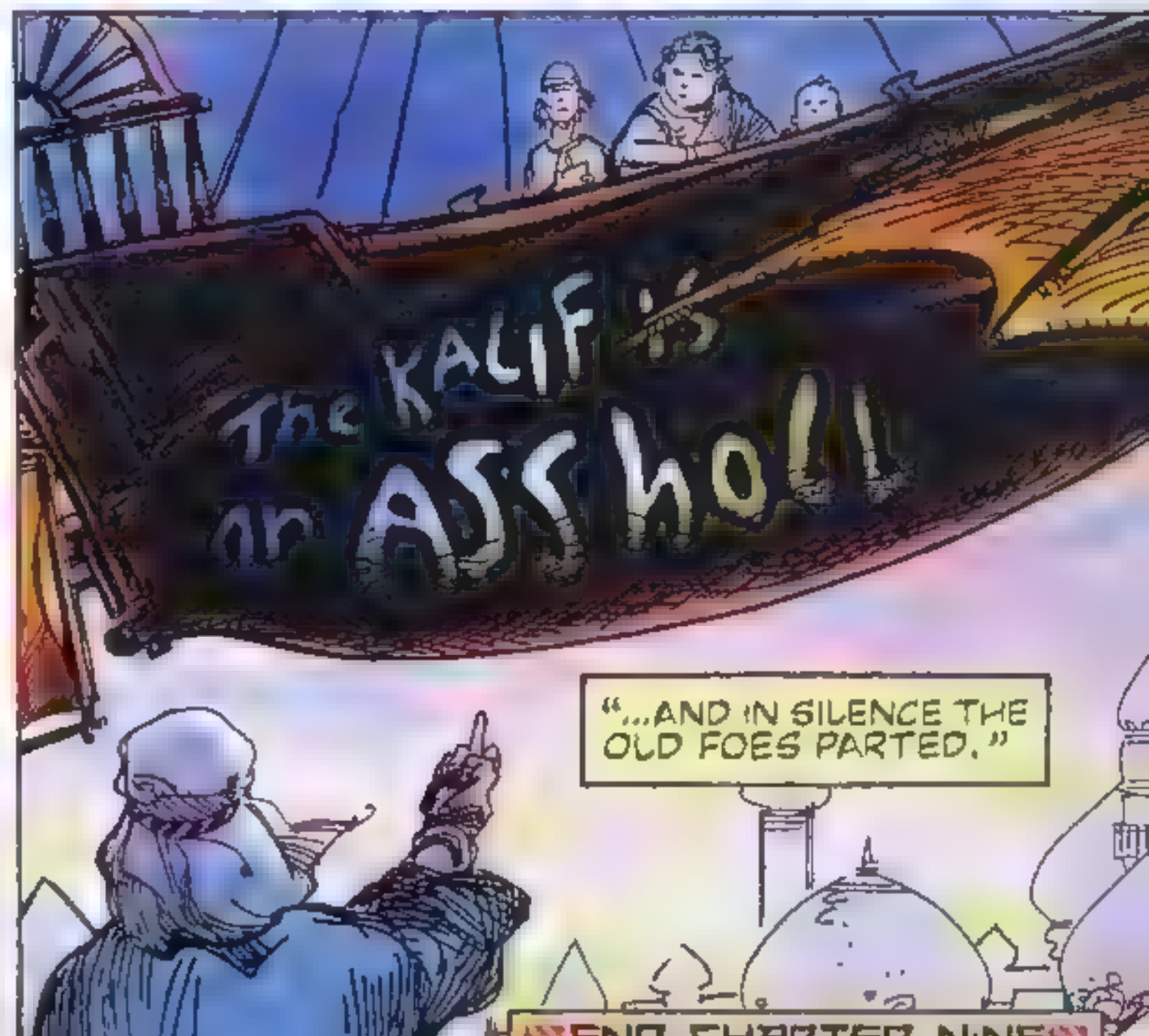
SWING HER
FULL ABOUT,
BLACJAG!

AYE,
AXUS!



YOU GOT FEAR
IN YOUR HEART
NOW, ANUK--?

KNOWING THE
OLD MAN WON'T BE
AROUND TO SAVE
YOUR SKIN?



THE KALIF IS
AN ASS HOLE!!

"...AND IN SILENCE THE
OLD FOES PARTED."

END CHAPTER NINE

PREVIOUSLY IN

Our story began on the evening prior to the wedding of not just a disparate bride and groom, but the two great dynasties the celestial couple represents. Saddened to relinquish his freedom to matrimony, the young Prince Heros, along with his cousin Stranghands and Adastra, sister of the princess-bride-to-be, set off upon one last adventure before the nuptial ceremonies of the next day.

But their simple jaunt across the galaxies in search of dragons, laughter, and the innocence they miss from their childhoods has taken complex turns. Spurned, all but slightly, in his growing affection for the beautiful Adastra, the impetuous Stranghands has soared off into the heavens, as his cousin Heros tried to arrest his dangerous, headlong flight.

Meanwhile, the Princess herself literally tumbled into an underworld dragon cave where she was discovered by Aragon, a man of doubtful purpose whom Adastra knew in her younger, more naive days.

Now, with time and space left spinning behind them, Heros and Stranghands have breached the known limits of their universe and crashed upon the life-withering plains known to all as The Eye of the Infinite, where dishonored and debased Gods must face the meticulous judgment of Destiny himself...

YOUNG GODS

young GODS

YOUNG GODS
--HOW COME YE
HERE TO MY
DOMAIN?

WHO SPEAKS?

'TIS NOT THY
PLACE TO QUESTION
ME, GODLING--

RATHER THAT I
ASK OF THEE.

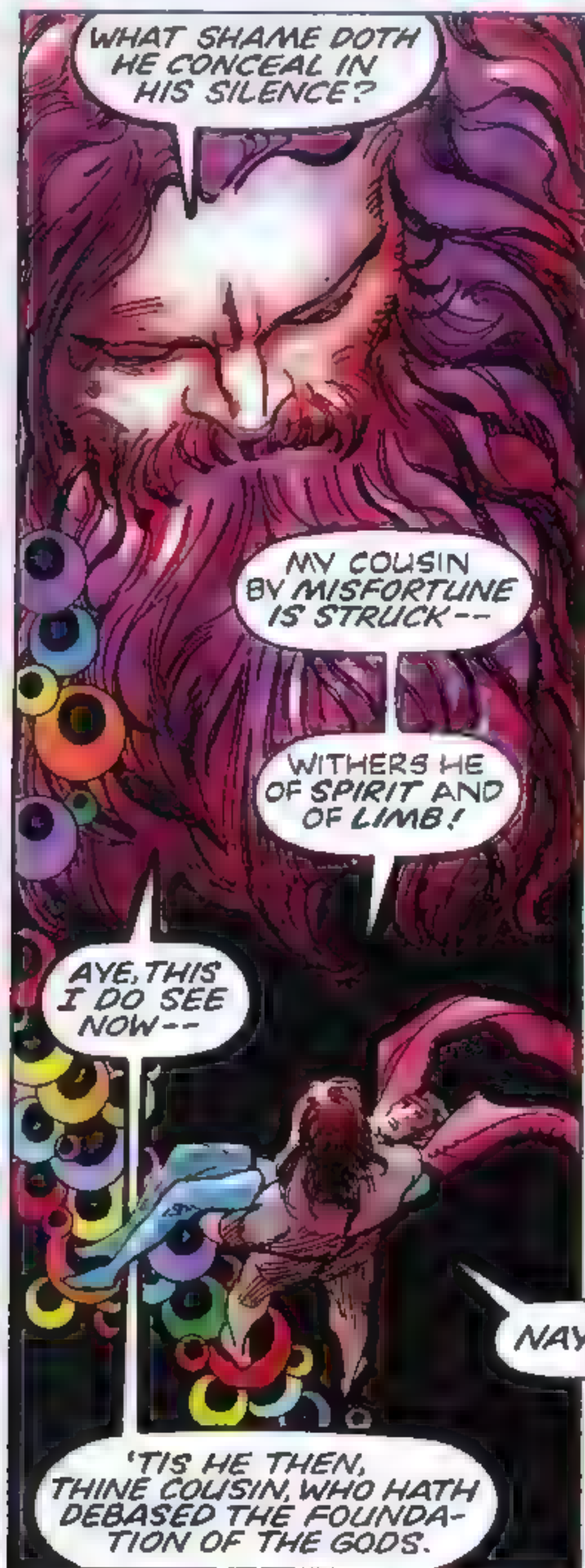
HOW HAST THOU
DISHONORED
THY CREED?

IN NO MANNER
HAVE WE.

THOU DOST LIE
TO AVERT MINE
JUDGEMENT.

NAY, I DO
NOT LIE!

THEN WHAT OF THY
COMPANION TACITURN
IN THINE ARMS--?



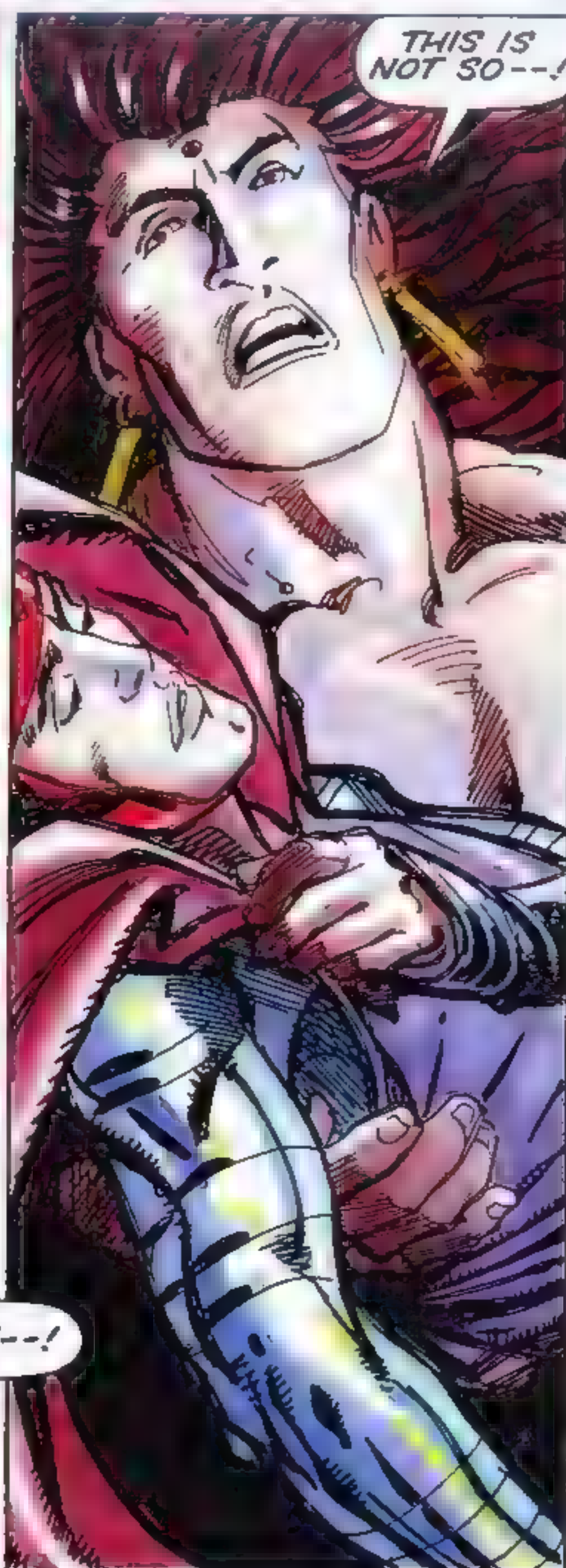
WHAT SHAME DOTH
HE CONCEAL IN
HIS SILENCE?

MY COUSIN
BY MISFORTUNE
IS STRUCK--

WITHERS HE
OF SPIRIT AND
OF LIMB!

AYE, THIS
I DO SEE
NOW--

'TIS HE THEN,
THINE COUSIN, WHO HATH
DEBASED THE FOUNDA-
TION OF THE GODS.



THIS IS
NOT SO--!



YOUNG GOD, 'TIS
NOT WISE TO ARGUE
WITH DESTINY!



...YET STILL I SCARCE
BELIEVE OUR PATHS HATH CROSSED
AGAIN, ADASTRA.

YEAH, TOOK ME BY
SURPRISE, TOO.

WHAT TIME HATH
PASSED, THINK THOU?

HARGH!

ELEVEN
HUNDRED YEARS,
GIVE OR TAKE
A BIT.



I AM AMAZED, SHALL I SAY HONORED, THAT THOU HAST COUNTED THE DAYS PASSING, PRINCESS.

I'VE COUNTED THE DAYS SINCE MY MOTHER TURFED ME OUT OF ORGASMA AND OFF THE LINE FOR THE THRONE, ARAGON--

SO DON'T KID YOURSELF!



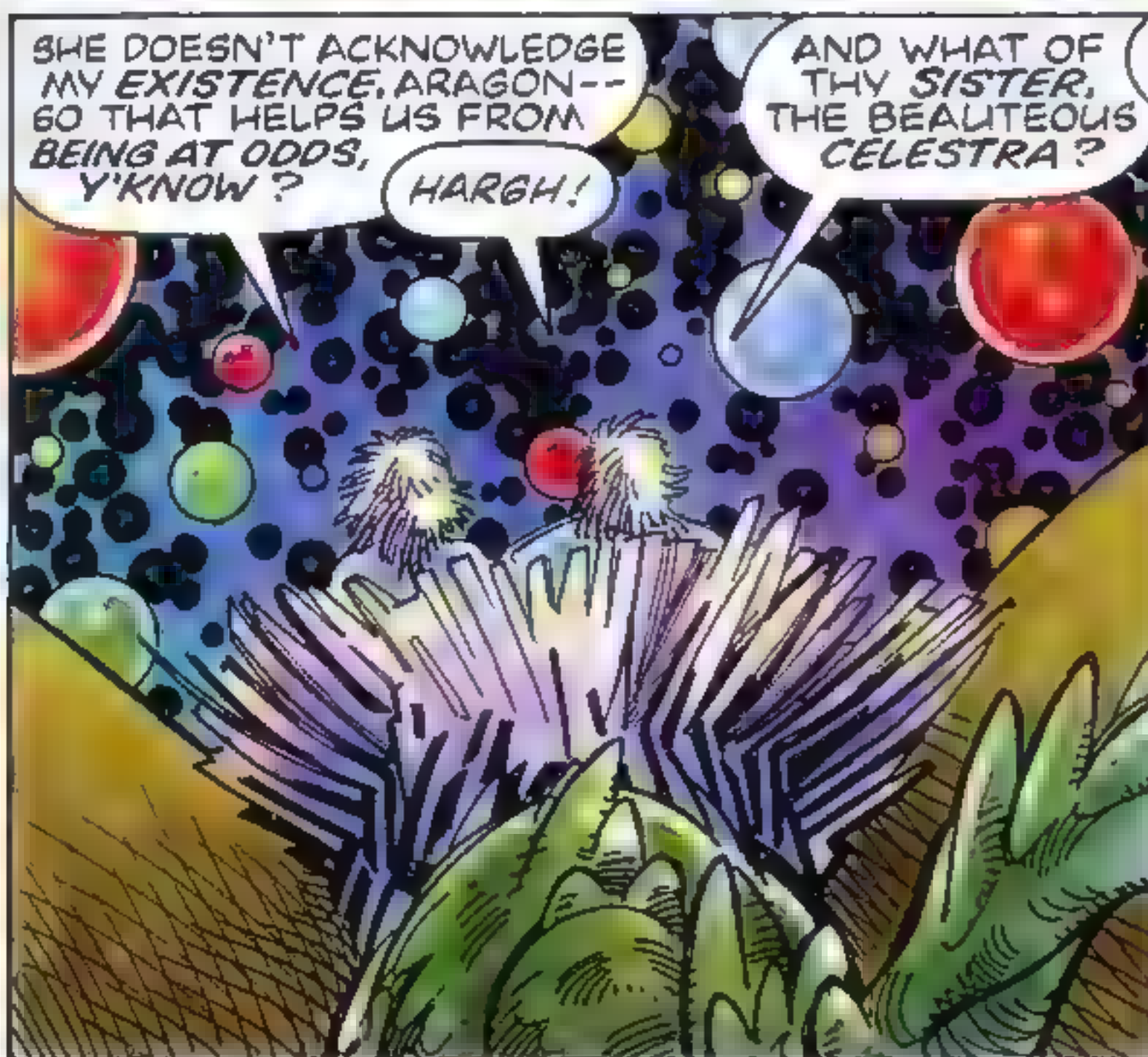
AH, QUEEN ORGANA --HOW IS THY MOTHER?

HARGH!

SHE'S A BITCH, LIKE ALWAYS.

A WOMAN OF FIERCE TEMPERAMENT, AS I RECALL--

ART THOU STILL AT ODDS, THEE AND SHE?

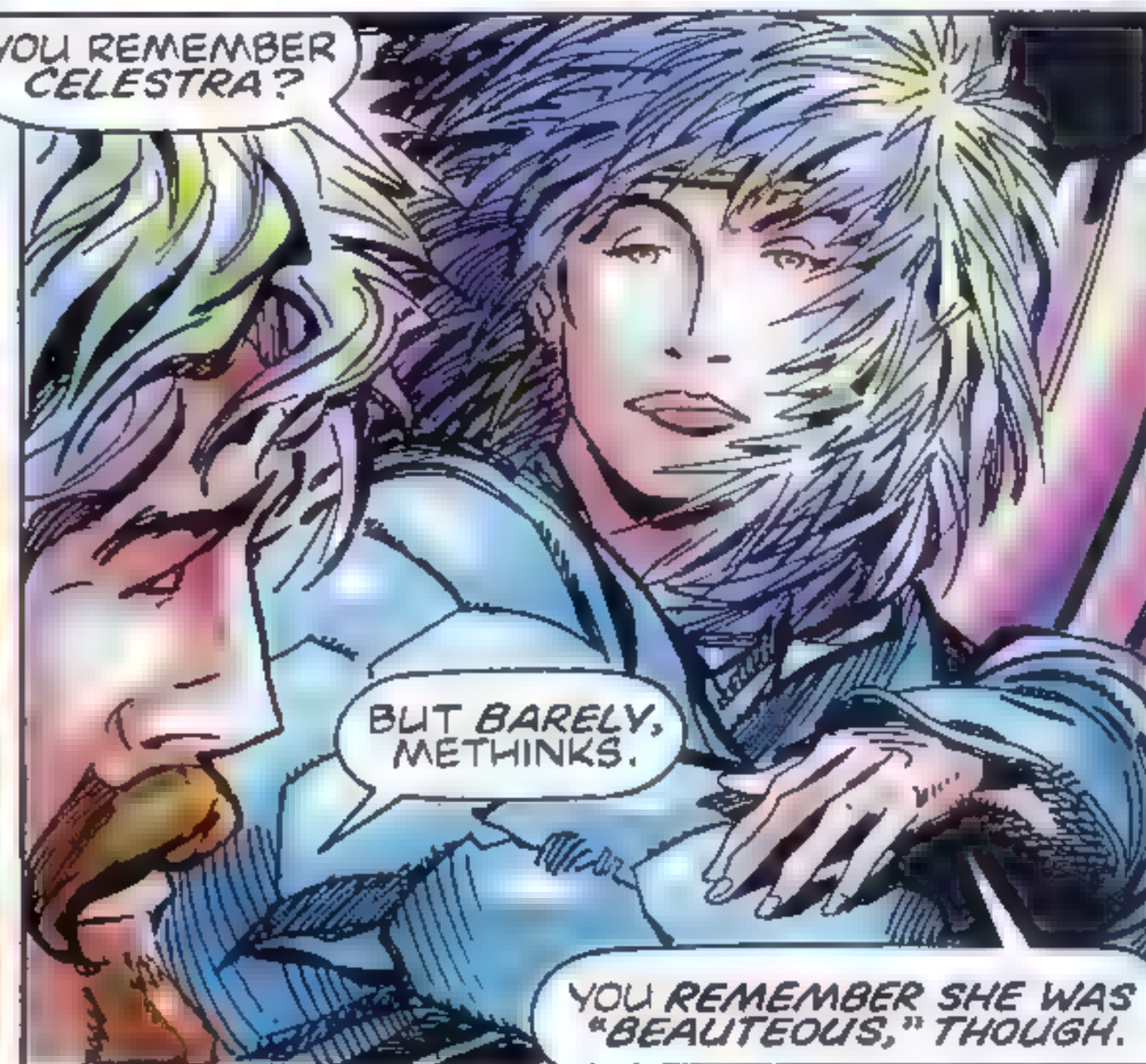


SHE DOESN'T ACKNOWLEDGE MY EXISTENCE, ARAGON-- SO THAT HELPS US FROM BEING AT ODDS, Y'KNOW?

HARGH!

AND WHAT OF THY SISTER, THE BEAUTEOUS CELESTRA?

YOU REMEMBER CELESTRA?



BUT BARELY, METHINKS.

YOU REMEMBER SHE WAS "BEAUTEOUS," THOUGH.



'TIS A COMMON ADDRESS FOR A PRINCESS--OF NONE INTENT WAS IT, MADAM.

OKAY--

YEAH, I GUESS SO.

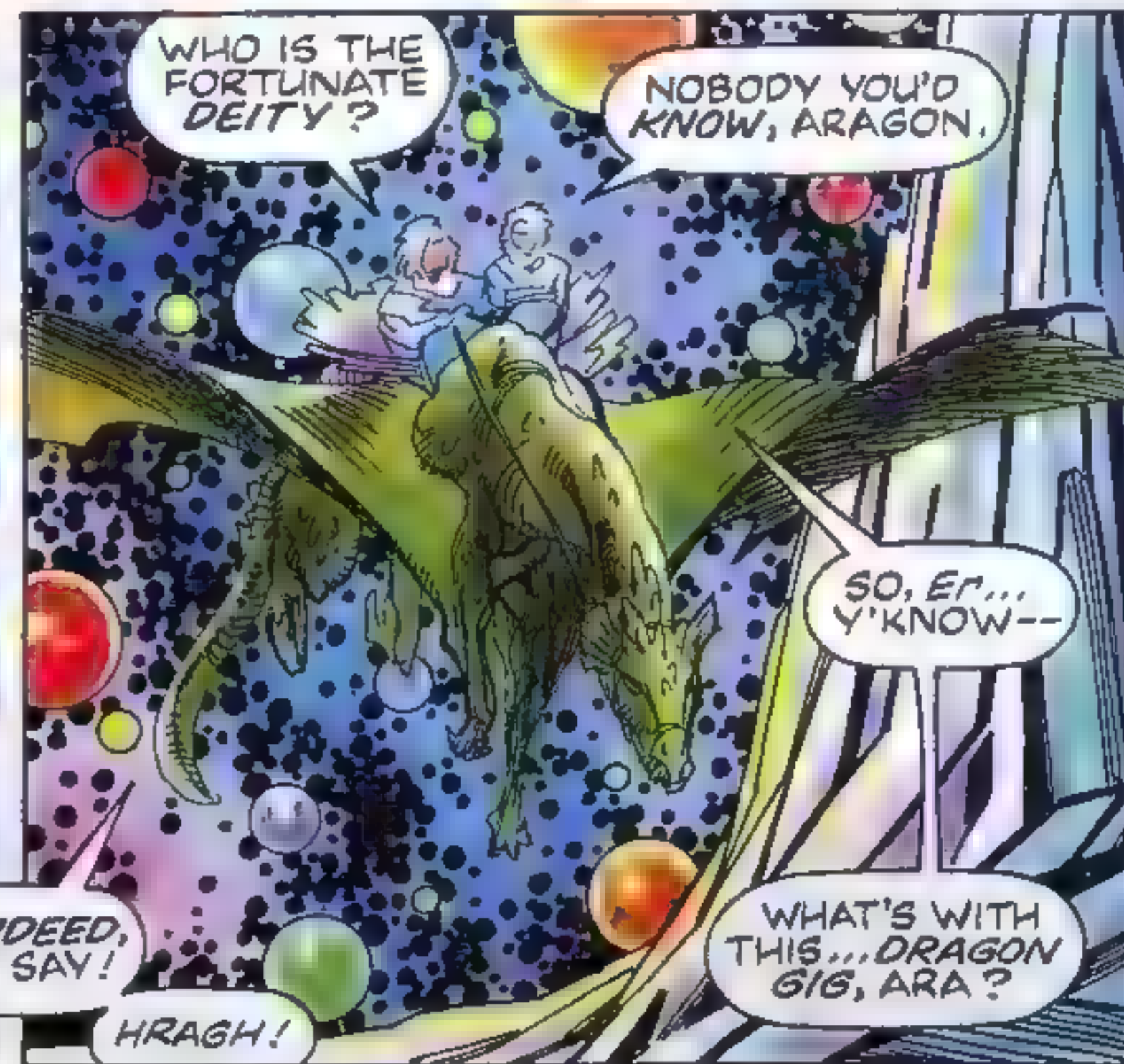
HARGH!

CELEST'S OKAY--

SHE'S GETTING MARRIED TOMORROW.

OH, INDEED, THOU SAY!

HARGH!

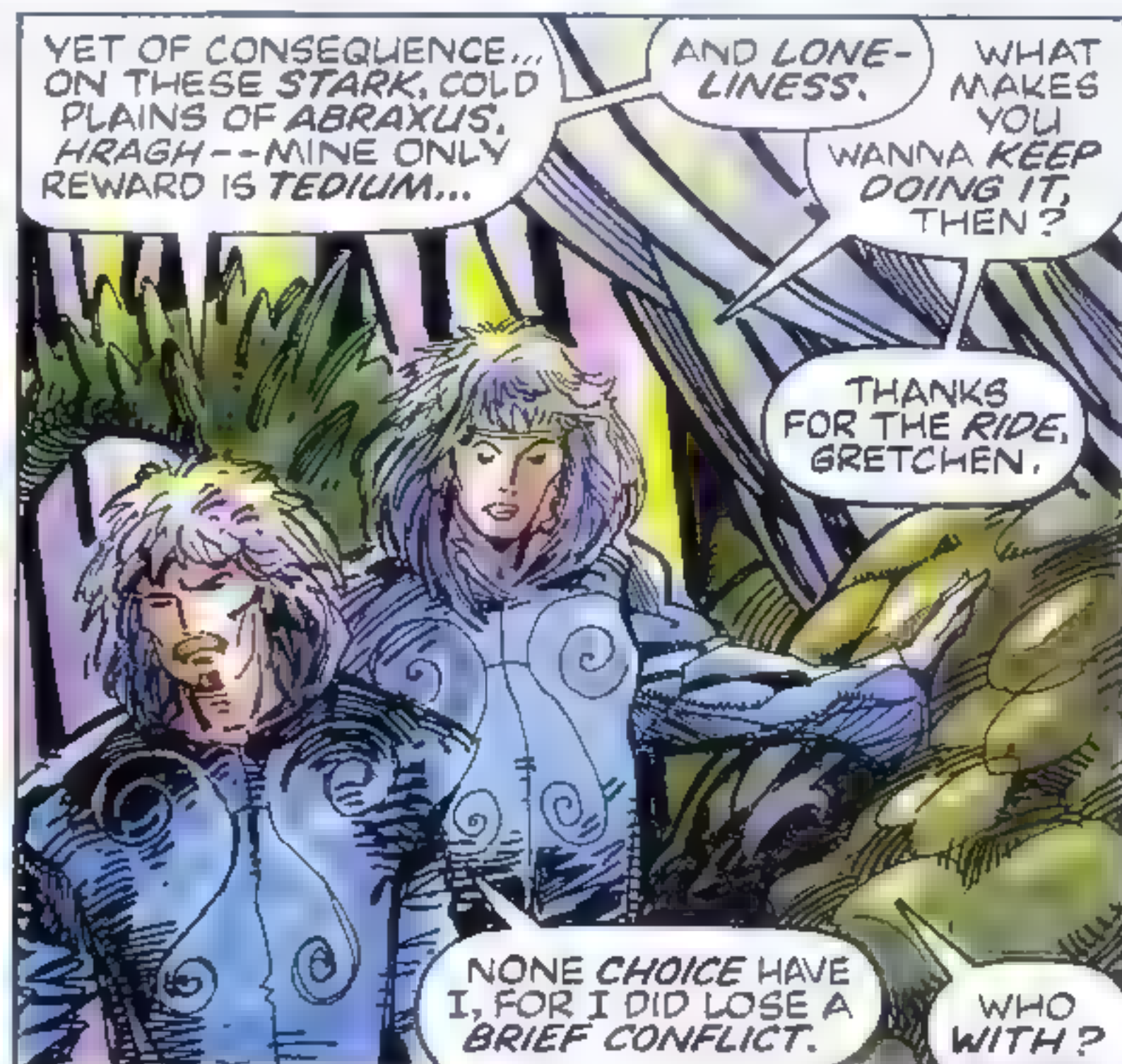
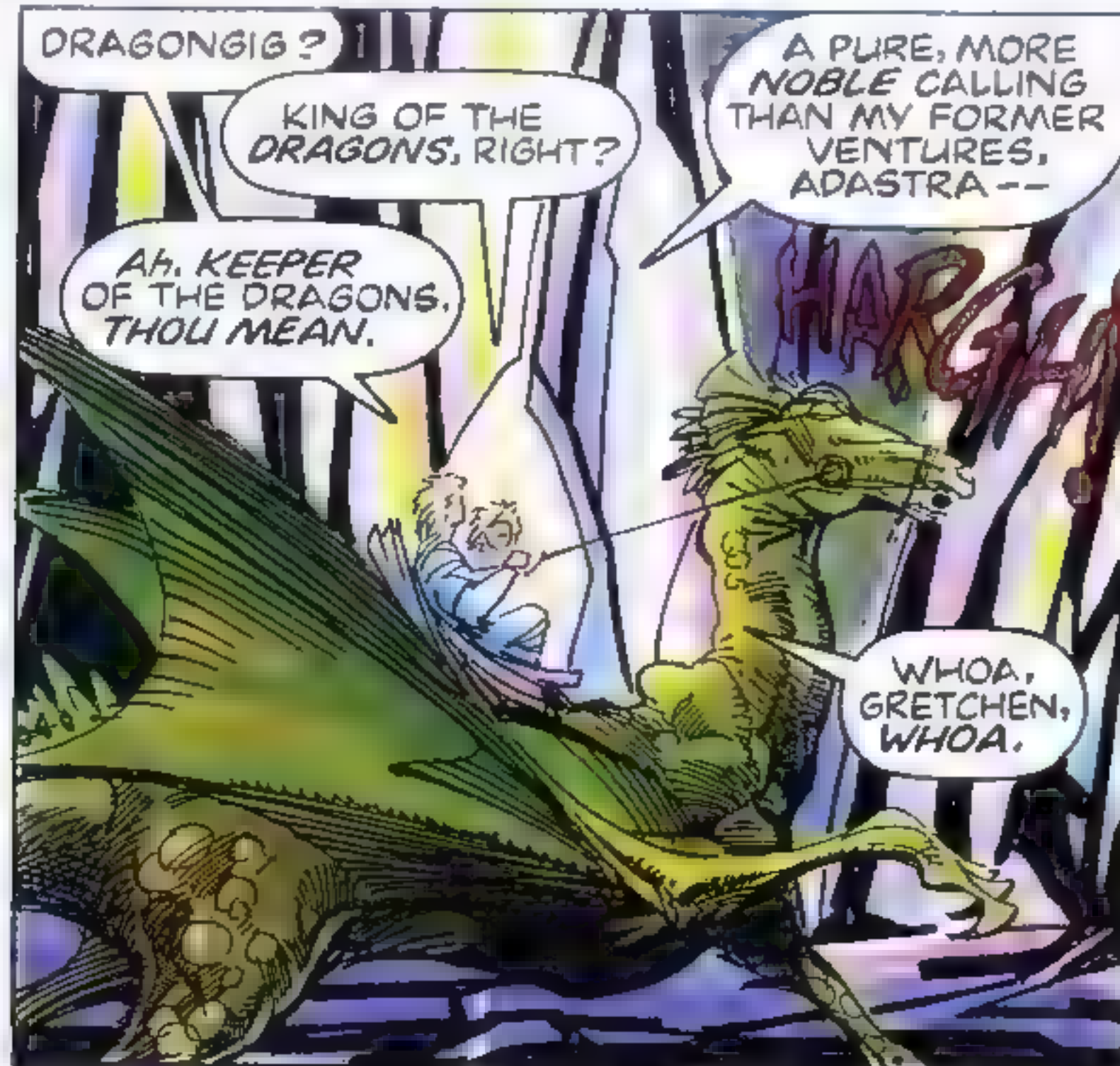


WHO IS THE FORTUNATE DEITY?

NOBODY YOU'D KNOW, ARAGON.

SO, ER... Y'KNOW--

WHAT'S WITH THIS... DRAGON GIG, ARA?





I SENSE ABOUT THINE
SELF THE DARK OF
WARFARE--AYE, THE
COLD SHADOWS OF
DOOM DO I SEE--

HOW IN SUCH
SHORT A LIFE COULD
THOU EFFECT SUCH
ILL AS THIS?

SPEAK FOR THY-
SELF, GODLING--
I SO ALLOW!



UH-- I AM CERTAIN, SIR,
THAT AS MYRIAD AS THE
HURLING COMETS MUST
BE MY FLAWS--

OR AS NUMBER-
LESS AS THE
STARS IN OUR
HEAVENS MIGHT
BE MINE CAL-
LOW ERRORS--

BUT, BY
MY TROTH,
O DOOM-
SAYER--

NE'ER IN MY HEART
NOR E'ER IN MY STRIDE
HATH I KNOWN NOR ABLED
SUCH SHAME AS THY
JUDGEMENT IMPLIES!

I SO
SWEAR!



THOUGH CLAIM THEE
WELL ENOUGH, GODLING--
IT IS FALSITY ALL--!

FOR NONE BUT
THE DISGRACED
AND BURDENED OF
SOUL WITHER
WITHIN MY
GAZE--

THIS IS IT
ALL-WAYS, ALL-
WHERES!

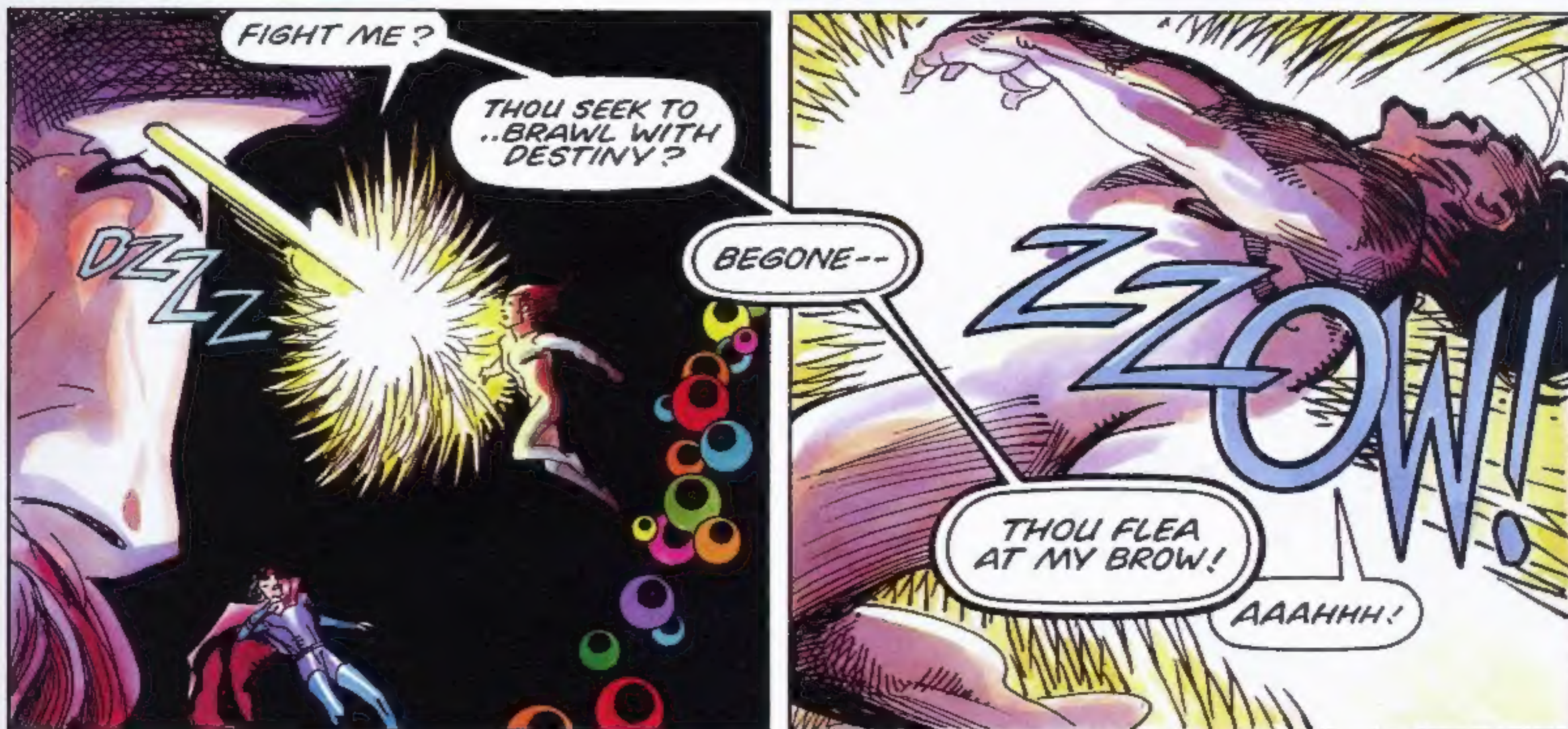
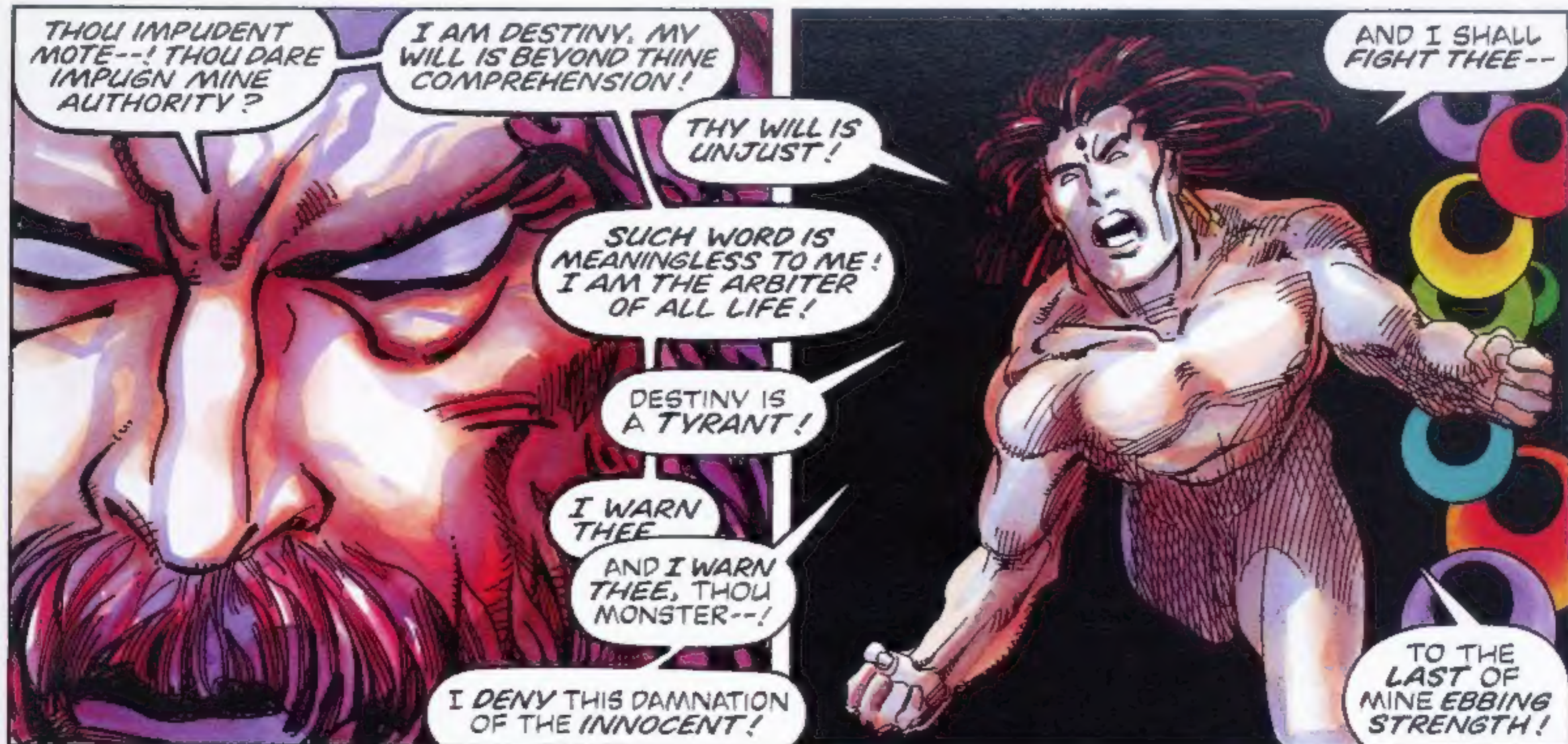
THEREFORE

NAY!
DESIST!

I CANNOT ALLOW
THIS MOCKERY TO
CONTINUE!



MOCKERY,
THOU SAY?!



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THE PARADOXMAN • CHAPTER 8

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YOUNG GODS • CHAPTER 9

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 Princess Adastra's painful past encounter with Aragon comes to the surface and Stranghands seeks his cousin through a blitz of red (blue, yellow, and orange) tape. Introducing Delpha, Gaea, and Aria.



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 Yeeky has a hangover, Corolanus' lute is busted, and the place is a mess. If you'd like to know what that "big trouble at the Peacock" was all about — don't ask Avida.



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 Just as Tristan Caine is beginning to get a handle on his own perceptions of reality, BWS turns things upside down with a small bombshell about this past month's story line.



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DEAR DIANA - THIS CONCEPT FOR SET COVER #9 SHALL HAVE TO BE
UNFINISHED AS ITS A BIT TOO GOOKY FOR MY TASTE IN COVERS
HOWEVER - IT MIGHT MAKE AN INTERESTING
BACK COVER FOR THE 8 PLEASE PRINT
IT AS IT IS
FULL COLOR
SCRAPPY &
ALL THAT
THANKS
BWS

HIZASHI

ANDY WITH SHOULD NOW BE
USED ON BACK OF SET #9



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